



ARMMA NEWS

#AEC175YouthArmenia



175th Anniversary of the
Armenian Evangelical Church

LVI 3

July-Aug-Sept
2022

ԱՆՈՒՄՏ ՊԱՇՏԵՐ
ՄԵՐ ՀԱՎԱՏՔԸ

ԵՐԲ. 10. 23



AMAA NEWS

is a publication of

The Armenian Missionary Association of America
31 West Century Road, Paramus, NJ 07652
Tel: (201) 265-2607; Fax: (201) 265-6015
E-mail: info@amaa.org
Website: www.amaa.org
(ISSN 1097-0924)

The AMAA is a tax-exempt, not for profit organization under IRS Code Section 501(c)(3)

Zaven Khanjian, Executive Director/CEO

OFFICERS

Nazareth Darakjian, M.D., President
Gary Phillips, Esq., Vice President
Phyllis Dohanian, Co-Recording Secretary
Thomas Momjian, Esq., Co-Recording Secretary
Nurhan Helvacian, Ph.D., Treasurer

EDITORIAL BOARD

Zaven Khanjian, Editor in Chief
Louisa Janbazian, Associate Editor, Art Director
Magda Poulos, Contributor
Jane Wenning, Contributor

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

In order to keep our mailing list up to date, please send all corrections, along with the old address, to:
AMAA NEWS
31 West Century Road
Paramus, NJ 07652
E-mail: amaanews@amaa.org

DESIGN

Caspianseal.com

NAMEPLATE

Yearbook, Inc.

PRINTING

Printsolutions.info
Englewood, NJ
Tel: (201) 567-9622

The Editorial Board of the AMAA News reserves the right to edit or abridge articles submitted for publication in accordance with publication policies.

[f](https://www.facebook.com/amaainc) [i](https://www.instagram.com/amaainc) [t](https://www.tiktok.com/@amaainc) [y](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC...) [in](https://www.linkedin.com/company/amaa-inc) @AMAAInc

CONTENTS

July • Aug • Sept 2022 /// LVI 3

3	Editorial - The... 200th Anniversary By Zaven Khanjian
4	A Festive Beginning in Yerevan By Rev. L. Nishan Bakalian
7	A Conference and A Banquet in Yerevan By Rev. L. Nishan Bakalian
8	HAYASA Theatrical Group Presents the Play "Hayrig"
9	To God be the Praise! By Rev. L. Nishan Bakalian
11	All-Armenian Evangelical Youth Conference By Tehminé Arakelyan
13	Letter of Blessing from Patriarch Mashalian
14	Letter of Blessing from Catholicos Karekin II
	AEC 175th ANNIVERSARY REFLECTIONS
16	What is our vision and what is its raison d'être? By Nazareth E. Darakjian, M.D.
17	The Clash of Stories By Rev. John Khanjian, Ph.D.
18	A Church that Looks in the Mirror By Rev. Paul Haidostian, Ph.D.
19	The Celebration of Communication By Rev. Michel Aghamalian, Ph.D.
20	A Time to Celebrate...and Reflect By Arthur H. Salibian, M.D.
22	Looking Around, Looking Ahead By Rev. L. Nishan Bakalian
23	Archiving 175 Years of History and Beyond By Vahram Shemmashian, Ph.D.
24	Armenian Evangelical Convictions By Rev. Hendrik Shanazarian
25	The Armenian Evangelical Church and Character Building By Hasmig Baran, Ed.D.
26	The Needed Epiphany By Harout Nercessian
27	Generations Proclaiming Praise By Rev. Calvin Sagherian
28	Proclaiming the Message of Jesus Christ By Rev. Dr. Obed Boyadjian
28	A Tribute to the Armenian Evangelical Church By Michael Voskian, D.M.D.
29	Inspirational Corner - Waves of Grace By Rev. Stephen Carlyle
30	Armenian Church of the Martyrs, Worcester, MA
32	Stephen Philibosian Foundation By Joyce Philibosian Stein
35	RA President Khachatryan Welcomes a Delegation of the AEC
35	RA Prime Minister Pashinyan Receives AMAA Delegation
36	AMAA Executive Director/CEO Visits Mission Field in Istanbul
38	AMAA's 13th Annual Medical Mission Trip to Armenia By Dr. Al and Sue Phillips
39	Serving Hands By Corrie Phillips
40	Evening of Gratitude in Yerevan, Armenia
40	Aren Deyirmenjian Appointed New AMAA Representative in Armenia
41	AMAA in Berdzor, Artsakh
42	Tell Me a Family Story By Daron Antranig Nouri
43	AMAA Awards Scholarships
44	Haigazian Holds 62nd Annual Commencement Exercises By Mira Yardemian
45	Class of 2022 Armenian Evangelical Schools Worldwide
46	Near East School of Theology - Class of 2022
46	AEUNA Holds its 26th Biennial General Assembly in Philadelphia
47	Visit With Prelate Archbishop Anoushavan Tanielian
47	AMAA Sunday at the Armenian Presbyterian Church of Paramus, NJ
48	AMAC Holds Retreat to Celebrate 175th Anniversary of AEC By Lara Kassardjian
49	Տօք. Նազարեթ Տարագճեանի պատգամը Ստեփանաւանի Նորակառոյց Կեդրոնի Բացման
50	Զաւէն Խանճեանի պատգամը Ստեփանաւանի Նորակառոյց Կեդրոնի Բացման
51	Հայաստանյայց Ավետարանական Եկեղեցու Մարտահրավերն Այսօր - Վեր. Զովհաննես Զովսեփյան
52	175 Տարիներու Աւանդը - Զրայր Ճեպճեան
53	Հայաստանյայց Ավետարանական Եկեղեցի - Դատումներ եւ Դիտումներ - Դոկտ. Երուանդ Զատուկի
55	Անցելալէն Այսօր՝ Բարեկարգութեան 175-ամեայ ճանապարհը - Վեր. Դոկտ. Յարութիւն Սեփմեան
57	In Memoriam - Joseph Zeronian, Ed.D.
58	Obituaries
61	Bookstore

Cover Photo: All-Armenian Evangelical Youth Conference participants at AMAA's Camp Sheen Shoghig in Hankavan, Armenia.

AEC Commemorates 175th Anniversary Հայաստանէայց Աւետարանական Եկեղեցի

The... 200th Anniversary

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord... Jeremiah 29:11

By **Zaven Khanjian**, AMAA Executive Director/CEO

The long awaited commemoration of the Armenian Evangelical Church (AEC) is over.

The Opera spectacle, the collective brainstorming, the worship and dedication services are all over. The gala, feasts and fellowships are history, and we have all returned home.

As I ponder our many activities in July, my outlook turns toward the 200th Anniversary of the Armenian Evangelical Church which will occur in 2046.

I will probably not be there. But I know the 175th Anniversary could be the springboard that will take us to our next milestone anniversary.

Many serious questions come to mind.

- **What will the Church look like in 2046?**
- **Will the Homeland survive the existential threats it faces today?**
- **Where will our communities in the Near East, the West and Armenia be?**
- **Who will write the history of the second century of the AE Church?**
- **Will the AE Research, Scholarship, Archive and Library in Armenia come to fruition?**
- **Will the traditional AE Church in Yerevan pierce its way out of the basement and stand tall?**

As believers, the answers to the above questions might not matter. Salvation is paramount. As an institution, however, all of them matter.

We do not live in a vacuum. We have an identity seeded in our historic Homeland, which today perpetuates in the independent Republic of Armenia. We have a mission, which relates to our identity from where it spreads beyond to the ends of the world. Consequently, the questions posed above are organic.

This issue of AMAA News that you hold in your hands is rich with the story of the commemoration and plans for the future. A steering committee diligently working for the past two years successfully delivered the goals set forth by the World Council. Reactions demonstrate that planned events were highly successful, well attended and God pleasing. Several hundred youth and adults gathered in Armenia, thanked God for His faithfulness, looked in a mirror, pondered on the future and committed to hold tight to the faith.

You will read that we asked a number of scholars, educators, theologians, ministers, community leaders, and professionals to reflect on the Anniversary. This issue carries bilingual opinions. We invite you to absorb the ideas, thoughts, attributes, and failures covered and join to steer the mission forward on the path drawn by the early founders. The church is the body of Christ made up of all believers, not just a select group. It will not survive without the collective piety, support, and faithfulness of believers.

I feel confident in the mission and ministry of the AMAA. It is well structured, well managed, and well administered. It is compact and relatively immune to breakdown and fragmentation.

I am, however, worried about the church. Unrestrained unrest in the East and unbound freedom in the West threatens the dynamics of its composition and expanded theological base that has held it together for many, many years.

Constructive elements who care about identity and mission should continue working hard to preserve the AEC in the framework established by the founders with as little erosion as possible. AMAA will not steer the AEC ship but will passionately support its unified course. AMAA wishes AEC a safe journey toward the 200th Anniversary and beyond to perpetuity.

May the AEC continue to spread the Word, illuminate the nation, and disseminate the Good News of the Gospel.

We hope that you enjoy reading this issue and we thank you for your support.



August 15, 2022
Glendale, California



Archbishop Nathan Hovhannissyan brings the blessings of His Holiness Karekin II, Catholicos of All Armenians at the AEC's 175th Anniversary Celebrations.

A Festive Beginning in Yerevan

On the Occasion of the 175th Anniversary of the Armenian Evangelical Church

By **Rev. L. Nishan Bakalian***

It was a festive evening to mark the 175th Anniversary celebration of the founding of the Armenian Evangelical Church, held on Friday, July 1, 2022, at the Aram Khachaturyan Concert Hall in Yerevan. Gathering both young and old, Armenian Evangelicals from across

the globe filled the venue to capacity to be part of this event that had been delayed a full year due to the COVID pandemic. The animated encounters in front of the concert hall clearly showed that this audience was not a random gathering of event goers, but a close-knit community with a direct

connection to one another, as well as to the history being celebrated.

As he opened the program, emcee Andranik Mardoyan, Armenia Press Officer of the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA), addressed not only the importance of the observance, but



also the crises the Armenian nation faces today, as he asked the audience to rise in honor of those who sacrificed their lives defending the Homeland in the 44-day war in 2020. Thereafter, in his capacity as 175th Anniversary Chair, AMAA's Executive Director/CEO Zaven Khanjian offered words of welcome and a call to continue the work of the Armenian Evangelical Church for the sake of the gospel among the Armenian nation. "If there is one thing you take away from tonight's event, let it be our theme: "Let us hold fast ... our faith" (Heb. 10:23).

The heads of the five Armenian Evangelical Unions each gave brief video greetings on the occasion of this event. It was noteworthy that in addition to the congratulatory letters printed in the program booklet, there were also letters of blessing from Karekin II, Catholicos of All Armenians (read by Archbishop Nathan Hovhannisyan)



Zaven Khanjian greets State Minister of Artsakh Republic Artak Beglaryan.

and from the Armenian Patriarch Sahag Mashalian of Constantinople (excerpts read by A. Mardoyan). Both leaders stressed the importance of mutual respect and mutual support in serving the Armenian nation and people.

Reviewing the birth and growth of the church, the first of three film presentations attempted to draw the scope of the first three-quarters of a century of the Armenian Evangelical Church, portraying the inception and initial progress of the church, all the way up to the great losses sustained during the Armenian Genocide. It was a hopeful yet sobering depiction, reminding us that although the Armenian people today number many more than existed in 1915, our church has yet to recover from those wounds, and has much work yet to do.

Patiently waiting throughout this opening section were the Armenian State Chamber Orchestra, the combined Yerevan State Chamber Choir, and the "Komitas" Choir. Taking the stage was conductor Dr. Vartan Agopian, formerly of Beirut but currently of Prague, who led the musicians in a series of pieces arranged by him for the occasion, a few played in each section of the program. These included hymn settings: a heartfelt rendition of "The Church's One Foundation,"

a light, almost whimsical "Faith of Our Fathers" and a contrapuntal setting of "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God." Also interspersed within the program were Armenian popular and folk songs, ranging from the classic Gomidas ("Karoun a" and "Vagharshabad Dance"), to an Armenian folk flavored Babajianian ("Azk Parabandz"), to a sensitive and dramatic offering of a popular song by Smbatyan ("Hayastan").

It is amazing to consider the quantity and range of contributions the Armenian Evangelical Church has made to the progress as well as the welfare of the Armenian nation.



Zaven Khanjian with Archbishop Nathan Hovhannisyan.

The second film presentation addressed major ways the Church has been a blessing despite its small numbers, whether in the areas of biblical literacy, or education, or publication, or social service and more. So much laudable work has been done in so many countries, and the beneficiaries of that dedicated service, or their descendants, were in fact those seated in the concert hall this very evening!

The third film presentation centered primarily on the Evangelical Church of Armenia and AMAA—Armenia’s work in the past three decades in Armenia and Artsakh. It was a good reminder to see on the screen the many initiatives in social as well as spiritual work that have been done over the years, and how the Evangelical Church of Armenia has an important role to play in the well-being of Armenia, with God’s leading.

At the evening’s conclusion, Maestro Vartan Agopian asked the audience to stand as he led the choir in an a cappella rendition of A. Missirian’s “Lord’s Prayer (Hayr Mer).” On behalf of the Armenian Evangelical World Council (AEWC), which organized the Jubilee Celebration, Rev. Joël Mikaélian, AEWC President, gave a closing charge to the audience: to take their faith out to those around them, laboring alongside their Armenian Apostolic and Armenian Catholic brethren, for the spread of the gospel. Thereafter he offered a Benediction.

And so, as it was before the event, so also afterwards, the attendees, anxious to greet one another, lingered together long after the lights were dimmed in the hall and continued their fellowship with the promise of more interactions in the days to come. 🇺🇸



*** Rev. L. Nishan Bakalian** is the Coordinator of Church Relations of the Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East. Rev. Bakalian’s ministry in Lebanon is supported jointly by the Armenian Missionary Association of America and the Wider Church Ministries of the United Church of Christ.



Scan to watch event!



Zaven Khanjian offers words of welcome and a call to continue the work of the Armenian Evangelical Church.



Rev. Joël Mikaélian offers the Benediction.



Aram Khachaturyan Concert Hall in Yerevan, Armenia.



A Conference and A Banquet in Yerevan

By Rev. L. Nishan Bakalian

Conferring together for the future of the Armenian Evangelical Church, clergy and lay people from across the globe gathered for the second day of this anniversary weekend. Assembling in the Yerevan sanctuary of the Evangelical Church of Armenia on Saturday morning, July 2, 2022, the conferees were welcomed by the Senior Pastor of the Evangelical Church of Armenia (ECA) Union, Rev. Mgrdich Melkonian, who offered the day's consultations to God in prayer. Rev. Joël Mikaélian, President of the Armenian Evangelical World Council (AEWC), presented the day's theme, based on the verse, "Let us run with perseverance the race set before us" (Heb. 12:1).

The morning sessions were dedicated to a historical view of the Armenian Evangelical Church, the AEWC, and the five member Armenian Evangelical Unions. They were also intended to be a time for each Union to express the challenges it faces, and to hear similar concerns coming from the other Unions.

Setting the stage for the initial presentations was the AEWC Executive Director, Rev. Dr. Vahan H. Tootikian, who though unable to be physically present, prepared a short video in which he explained the basic events surrounding the birth of the Church in Constantinople in 1846, and laid out the major areas in which the Armenian Evangelical Church has contributed to the growth and well-being of the Armenian people. Rather than being an occasion for resting

on our laurels, Rev. Tootikian challenged the assembly to consider how to pass the torch to the coming generations.

Thereafter, each Union representative came to the stage to sketch out its present makeup along with its challenges. Without exception, the Unions (North America, France, Near East, Eurasia, and Armenia) spoke about the difficulties they face in understanding or maintaining their identity as Armenians, along with the shortage of church leaders, especially of clergy. It matters little whether a particular Union is facing financial stresses or security issues, or whether it enjoys material wealth and safety, the issue of leadership remains primary. Even in the case where there are no empty pulpits, such as Armenia, the issue still looms on the horizon.

Though not a Union, AMAA also presented its story, and how from its inception it focused on the strengthening of Armenian national and spiritual identity wherever it serves. Executive Director/CEO Zaven Khanjian also put forth three challenging realities that concern AMAA: namely, the continual crises in the Middle East, the inevitable decay of Armenian identity in the west, and the dependency of Armenia on outside assistance. Mr. Khanjian also offered a quick overview of the Stephen Philibosian Foundation, noting how strongly the Philibosians felt about the education and well-being of Armenian children in the Near East.

When the youth representatives of each Union were finally able to offer their perspectives, certain themes emerged,

particularly the need for inclusion of youth in meaningful ways in the life of the local church. They challenged the attendees, particularly the clergy, to give priority to the preparation and equipping of their youth for outreach and service, by providing a strong biblical base and the ability to face the challenges of today's world. They, too, are concerned about their Armenian identity, though each face different circumstances and deal with them in different ways. As well, they wish to see their peers on the forefront of sharing the gospel, standing together as a community in an extremely individualized world. One young man shared a particularly meaningful comment: "We are a small church and sometimes feel alone, but it is a great blessing to be here with all of you and realize we belong to a big church family!"

After lunch in the newly renovated cafeteria of the AMAA Center, the conferees divided into groups to examine a series of questions and then share the outcome of their deliberations with the entire group. Topics included the structure and function of the AEWC, ways to promote mutual awareness and support between Unions, training, and inclusion of young people in a life of discipleship and service to their communities and the Armenian people and taking particular care to help young people discern the call of God to ministry work. The deliberations of these groups will be forwarded to the Council for them to discuss and then pursue in their next meeting this fall.

The conference closed with a brief meditation by Rev. Albert Paytyan on the sac-

rifice acceptable to God, followed by Holy Communion officiated by Rev. Hendrik Shanazarian, and concluding with a prayer of dedication by Rev. Dr. Paul Haidostian.

Later in the evening, as if an antidote to all of the sitting and listening they did, many of the group attended an anniversary banquet of the organization “Espoir pour l’Arménie” (Hope for Armenia). Founded in 1989 by the Union of Armenian Evangelical Churches in France, it has offered over the years not only material relief but has brought group after group of volunteers to Armenia to hold children’s and youth camps and serve in other ways. In a breezy outdoor setting at the Congress Hotel, the evening’s program included an offering of thanks to all those in Armenia and the U.S., especially to AMAA officers and staff, who helped Espoir pour l’Armenie in their mission to bring hope to the Armenian nation. 🇺🇸



“Espoir pour l’Arménie” (Hope for Armenia) celebrates 30th Anniversary Banquet at Congress Hotel in Yerevan.

Evangelical Church of Armenia’s HAYASA Theatrical Group Presents the Play “Hayrig” (Daddy) Depicting the Life of Rev. Aharon Shirajian, a savior of Armenian Orphans

The final event of the Armenian Evangelical Church's 175th Anniversary celebration in Armenia was held on Thursday, July 7, 2022, as the Evangelical Church of Armenia's "Hayasa" theatrical group presented the play "Hayrig" at the Theater of the Young Spectator. The actors, ranging in age from very young to adult, presented scenes from Rev. Aharon Shirajian's life in Aleppo during the years of the Armenian Genocide. At that time, Rev. Shirajian was known to many as "Hayrig" (Daddy), a savior of Armenian orphans, head of the "Aleppo House of Blessing," and the epitome of the mercy of Jesus Christ.

Script Writer and Director Nuné Abrahamyan presented the humanitarian work of Rev. Shirajian, who saved the lives of over 15,000 orphans. Also included in her script was the selfless service of Dr. Asadour Altounian of Aleppo. The unending threats of the Turks, the hopes and sorrows of the orphans, and the deep Christian convictions of Rev. Shirajian were all depicted on stage.

The play also included video portions from Rev. Shirajian's actual living descendants (his daughter Aranoush and granddaughter Joy). Also present in the audience was his grandson John Shirajian, who with his wife's assistance, shared his personal memories and sentiments. AMAA’s Executive Director/CEO Zaven Khanjian, an Aleppo-Armenian, expressed his emotion-filled appreciation and challenged the young people in the audience to continue serving in Rev. Shirajian’s Christlike, dedicated manner, for the betterment of the Armenian nation. 🇺🇸



Scan to watch play!



A scene from "Hayrig" play.



John Shirajian (second from left), grandson of Rev. Aharon Shirajian and his wife Aline (on the right) pictured with the main cast of the play.

To God be the Praise!

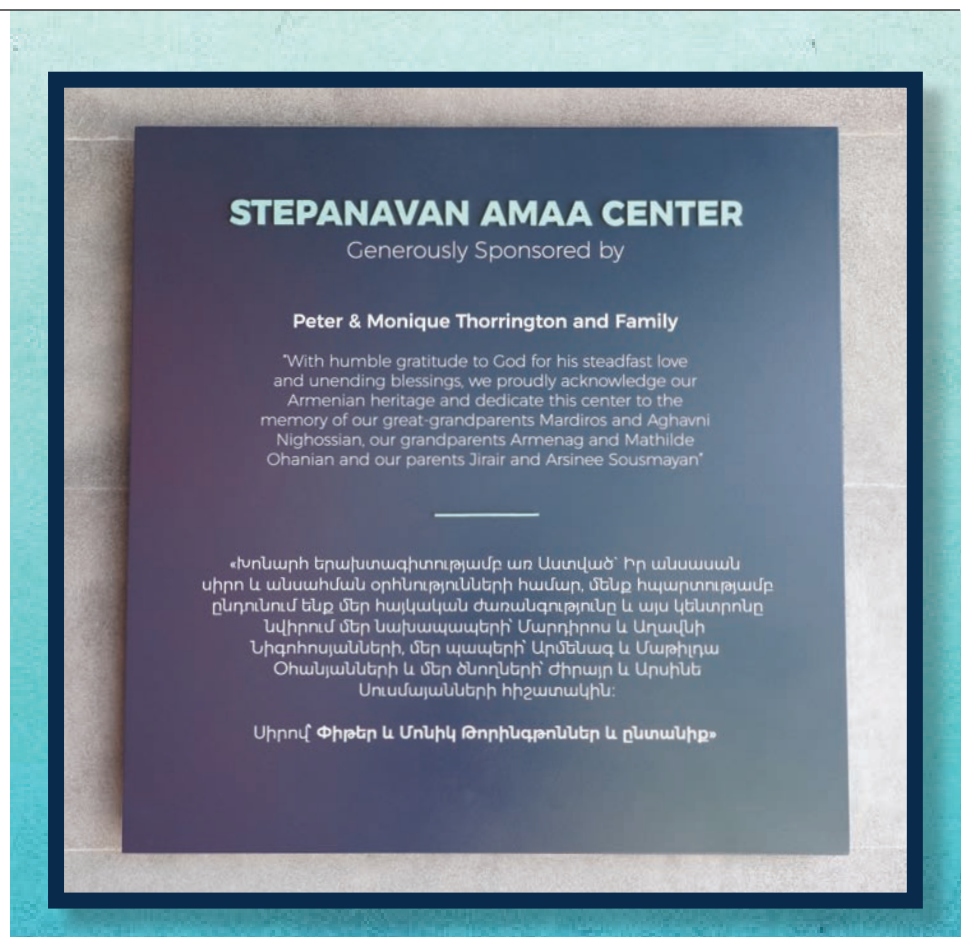


Dedication of AMAA's Newly Constructed Building of Ministry Center in Stepanavan

By Rev. L. Nishan Bakalian

Early on Sunday morning, July 3, 2022, overseas visitors and local church members made their way to the north of Armenia, to the city of Stepanavan, to offer praises to God for His many blessings, particularly for a trio of observances: the dedication of the Armenian Missionary Association of America's (AMAA) newly constructed building of Ministry Center, the dedication of the renovated Evangelical Church of Armenia (ECA) building, and most especially the service of praise and thanksgiving to God for the over 175 years of the Armenian Evangelical Church.

All three events were to have taken place one year ago, upon completion of the construction and reconstruction work, but due to the global COVID pandemic everything was postponed for one year. Nonetheless, AMAA staff and volunteers from the church were on hand and prepared to welcome the busloads of people and guide them to the stairs of the Center. There a group of young girls in traditional costumes from the AMAA Center's dance group performed a graceful Armenian dance to open the ceremony. Invoking Psalm 127:1, AMAA



President Dr. Nazareth Darakjian offered words of challenge to keep God as the foundation of the Center's work, while AMAA Executive Director/CEO Zaven Khanjian spoke words of gratitude toward the benefactors who wished to honor the memory of three generations of their forebears, all for the good of today's Armenia. ECA Senior Pastor Rev. Mgrdich Melkonian then offered a prayer of dedication for the work that already began and will continue in this facility. The ribbon was cut, the dedicatory plaque was unveiled, and the Center's workers began taking visitors to tour the myriad facilities within the building, which serves the needs especially of the children of Stepanavan, in school subjects, the arts, as well as social and psychological needs.

Soon, however, the group had to move across the grounds to the church sanctuary as the worship service was about to begin. The church's Pastor, Rev. Hrant Badalyan, opened the service with prayer and led the overall service, while the choir and pianist led the congregation in singing the Doxology, "Fairest Lord Jesus" and "The Church's One Foundation." Participants in the service included pastors from all the Armenian Evangelical Unions, beginning with Rev. Joël Mikaélén's greetings to all in the

congregation in the name of the Armenian Evangelical World Council (AEWC).

Dr. Darakjian also brought a special message to the service, reminding the church that God resides not in man-made structures, but in the hearts of the people who comprise the church. As well, Mr. Khanjian exhorted the church to make their aim to develop Christian character in young and old, and so to bring those virtues to help guide the Armenian nation in the ways of God. Following these words, Rev. Dr. Haroutune Selimian, President of the Armenian Evangelical Community of Syria, gave a prayer of dedication for the 175th Anniversary of the Armenian Evangelical Church and its mission.

Shifting the focus to the dedication of the refurbished church building, Rev. Albert Paytyan, President of the ECA, presented a historical narrative of the Armenian Evangelical community of Stepanavan, dating from over a century ago, and noting that the Stepanavan church was the first church structure to be built by the AMAA in Armenia. Haigazian University President Rev. Dr. Paul Haidostian's moving prayer of dedication for the church brought each aspect of the worship life of the Armenian Evangelical community of Stepanavan before God, asking for the

Holy Spirit to be present at every moment in their corporate and individual lives.

In his sermon for the day, Rev. Hrant Badalyan applied the message of "Where Is Christ?" (Rev. 3:20) to the special occasions being celebrated that day, as well as to the individual lives of believers any day. With humor as well as conviction, he spoke of the ways Christians keep Christ from entering their inner world, and exhorted all to be warm-hearted toward the Lord as the key to the vitality of the local as well as worldwide church.

In closing the service with the singing the Lord's Prayer ("Hayr Mer"), the hundreds in attendance expressed their unity in Christ and their love for the Armenian nation. Well after the service ended, the enthusiastic interaction between worshipers continued, while tours resumed next door. A generous table was spread for visitors to enjoy lunch and fellowship, with singers presenting Armenian songs and bringing hosts and guests alike to their feet in Armenian dancing. After exchanging farewells and promises of meeting again in Armenia, the attendees began their long journey back to Yerevan and onward, with God's praises in their hearts for these days of blessing. 🇬🇪



TOP, PICTURED L TO R: AMAA's Stepanavan Center children dancing; Rededication worship service of Evangelical Church of Armenia in Stepanavan; Lunch on the grounds of AMAA Stepanavan Center. **BOTTOM, PICTURED L TO R:** Zaven Khanjian and Dr. Nazareth Darakjian eating the traditional bread and salt; Sona Khanjian unveils the dedicatory plaque of Stepanavan Center; Guests at the dedication ceremony of AMAA's Stepanavan Center.



All-Armenian Evangelical Youth Conference

Reflecting on the Armenian Evangelical Church's Past, Appreciating the Present and Thinking About the Future

By Tehminé Arakelyan*

For a few brief minutes, the following video message appeared worldwide on the computers of the youth of the Armenian Evangelical Church: *You are invited to the Homeland to participate in the All-Armenian Evangelical Youth Conference on the occasion of the 175th Anniversary of the Armenian Evangelical Church.*

Many of the viewers confirmed their participation with one click of a button. Months later, airplanes landed, and cars went to the same location, for the same purpose. About 170 youth from America and France, Russia and Australia, Syria and Lebanon, Canada, Artsakh and different regions of Armenia arrived in Yerevan. From June 30 to July 10, 2022, the youth, different in their culture and language, but one in heritage and faith, united to reflect on the Armenian Evangelical Church's past, to appreciate the present and think about the future.

Initiating this event was the Armenian Evangelical World Council and the Arme-

nian Missionary Association of America. Thanks to their vision and cooperation, youth from all Armenian Evangelical Unions joined together to raise thanks to God, strengthen the connection of evangelical youth worldwide and reaffirm the purpose of the existence of the Armenian Evangelical Church.

The opening Worship Service of the Conference was held at the sanctuary of the Evangelical Church of Armenia on Baghramyan Street in Yerevan. Songs of praise and unison prayer, and an encouraging message about the source of strength – the Word of God – were heard, followed with "colorful" meetings and paring of groups, familiar and unfamiliar gazes, and greetings. A colorful start was a given.

During the ten-day Conference, the youth discovered anew the Evangelical Church of Armenia, the motherland, their compatriots and of course, themselves. They saw and felt their culture and the spirit of the motherland with a new perspective. They visited the "Machanents House" Museum, the blue-eyed beauty of Sevan and

Sevanavank, the ancient site of Amberd, the Grove of Letters and the Khor Virab Church complex. They also visited Yerablur – the Military Pantheon – paying their respects to those who fought and sacrificed their lives during the three wars of Artsakh, the heroes of an entire generation. They also visited the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin and met with the Catholicos of All Armenians. They attended an event dedicated to the 175th Anniversary of the Armenian Evangelical Church held at Aram Khachatryan Concert Hall and attended the "Hayrig" (Daddy) Play, performed by the "Hayasa" theatrical group of the Evangelical Church of Armenia at the Theater of the Young Spectator, bringing challenges from the Evangelical Church's past to the present.

In addition to these busy days on the road, the youth spent about four days at the Conference's main location, the "Sheen Shoghig" Camp in Hankavan, where all linguistic and cultural barriers were removed, the language of communication became prayer, and the uniter the Word of God. The gazes and greetings

became warmer and friendlier. The 170 youth, with different backgrounds and personalities, world views and visions, and age differences, gathered in one location, around one goal – to live a practical faith to follow Christ with all the soul, heart, and mind, and by following Him to see the future of the Church. They had four days full of united praise, sharing of the Word of God, individual and group moments, thematic discussions revealing the vision of the Church, water and extreme games, and culturally enlightening evenings.

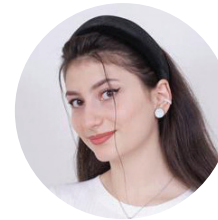
In the heart of Yerevan, on the streets, in buses, in historical places, the participants of the Youth Conference were distinguished by their hats, colorful bags, and t-shirts with the slogan of the 175th Anniversary of the Armenian Evangelical Church, “Let us hold fast ... our faith” (Heb. 10:23). They began to realize that they are the forebears of the 175 years of history and that everyone has the responsibility to keep the faith intact.

At the end of the Conference, the planes took off, taking with them the youth



of the All-Armenian Evangelical Youth Conference with bags filled with souvenirs, with new Armenian friends from different countries, 240 hours of memories, and of course, eyes that see the past, present and future of the Evangelical Church. 🇬🇪

(Translated from Eastern Armenian by Louisa Janbazian)



*** Tehminé Arakelyan** is Press Officer of the Evangelical Church of Armenia - Yerevan.



A letter of blessing from the Armenian Patriarch Sahag Mashalian of Constantinople on the occasion of the 175th Anniversary of the Armenian Evangelical Church.



ՀԱՅԱՍՏԱՆԻ ՀԱՆՐԱՊԵՏՈՒԹՅԱՆ
ՍԱՀԱԳ ՊԱՏՐԻԱՐԿՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ

ARMENI
PATRIKLIGI
ISTANBUL

ARMENIAN
PATRIARCHATE
ISTANBUL

ՀԱՅԱՍՏԱՆԻ ՀԱՆՐԱՊԵՏՈՒԹՅԱՆ ՍԱՀԱԳ ՊԱՏՐԻԱՐԿՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ
27 Յունիս 2022
13276

ՅԱՐԳԱՐԺԱՆ
ՏԻԱՐ ՋԱԲԵԼ ԽԱՆԴԵԱՆ
ԳՈՐԾԱՐԴԻ ՏՆՕՐԷՆ՝ ԱՌԵՏԱՐԱՆՉԱԿԱՆԻ ԵՒ
ԱՏԵՆԱՊԵՏ՝ 175-ԱՄԵԱԿԻ ՅԱՆՁՆԱԽՈՒՄԲԻ
ՄԻԱՑԵԱԼ ՆԱՀԱՐԱՆԵՐ

Յարգարծան Տիար Խանճեան,

Ձերոյ Ազնուութեան գրատըր հաղորդումէն արդէն իսկ տեղեկացած ենք, թէ 1 Յունիս 2022 թուականին հանդիսութեամբ պիտի նշուի Հայ Աւետարանական Եկեղեցւոյ 175-ամեակը, ի Հայաստան:

Անգամ մը եւս շնորհակալութիւն կը յայտնենք այն ազնիւ հրաւերին համար, զոր ուղղած էիք յայտնելով Ձեր փափաքը, որպէսզի միանանք Ձեզի: Դժբախտաբար նախօրօք որոշուած կարեւոր հանդիպումներ ու ժամադրութիւններ չեն թոյլատրեր որ բացակայինք Աթոռէն: Եկեղեցւոյ մը պատմութեան մէջ կարեւոր հանգրուաններ կան, որոնք երբ հասանելի կը դառնան առիթը կը ստեղծեն անդրադառնալու ի փառս Աստուծոյ եւ հաւատացելոյ շինութեան ու մխիթարութեան համար տարուած Աստուածաւաճող գործունէութեանց:

Հայ Աւետարանական Եկեղեցին իր հոգեւոր խնամքին յանձնուած հաւատացեալներու համար եղած է Աստուծոյ խօսքը փոխանցող հոգեւոր հաստատութիւն, բան մը որ ցուցիչ է հաւատարմութեան հանդէպ Քրիստոսի պատուիրանին: Փառք Աստուծոյ, որ ներկայ ժամանակներուն միջեկեղեցական բարօք յարաբերութիւններ կը մշակուին, եկեղեցիներ եթէ ոչ միութեան, գոնէ միասնականութեան մթնոլորտին մէջ զանազան առիթներով միասնաբար կը մտահոգուին եւ կ'աղօթեն, երբ կը ծագին հարցեր որոնք կը սպառնան համայն աշխարհի մարդկութեան բարօքութեան եւ խաղաղութեան: Մեր երկրին մէջ, մենք կը վայելենք ի Քրիստոս եղբայրութեան այս քաղցրութիւնը, փոխադարձ յարգանքի եւ սիրոյ երջանկութիւնը, պայմանաւ որ իւրաքանչիւր եկեղեցի մնայ իր սահմաններուն մէջ:

Այս գագաթումներով կու գանք շնորհաւորել Հայ Աւետարանական Եկեղեցւոյ 175-ամեակը, միանալով եկեղեցւոյ սպասաւորներուն հոգեւոր ուրախութեան: Աստուած կարողութիւն պարգեւէ բոլորին, որպէսզի Աստուծոյ օգնականութեամբ եւ Սուրբ Հոգւոյ շնորհներով շարունակեն իրենց կանոնական սահմաններուն մէջ գործել, մնալով ծառայութեան պատեհին վրայ:

Մաղթելով ի Տեառնէ կարողութիւն եւ յաջողութիւն Ձեր ծառայութեանց մէջ, մնամք

Աղօթարար՝

ՍԱՀԱԳ Բ.
ՊԱՏՐԻԱՐԿ ՀԱՅՈՑ ԹՈՒՐԿԻՅԱ

A letter of blessing from His Holiness Karekin II, Catholicos of All Armenians on the occasion of the 175th Anniversary of the Armenian Evangelical Church.

ԾԱՅՐԱԳՈՅՆ ՊԱՏՐԻԱՐԿ
ԿԱԹՈՂԻԿՈՍ
ԱՄԵՆԱՅՆ ՀԱՅՈՑ
ՄԱՅՐ ԱԹՈՒՍՈՒՐԷ ԷՋՄԻԱՇԵՆ



SUPREME PATRIARCH
CATHOLICOS
OF ALL ARMENIANS
MOTHER SEE OF HOLY ETCHMIADZIN

1 հուլիսի, 2022 թ.

Թիվ 712

ՕՐՀՆՈՒԹՅԱՆ ԽՈՍՔ

Ամերիկայի Հայ Ավետարանական Ընկերակցության և Հայ Ավետարանական Համաշխարհային Խորհրդի նախաձեռնությամբ այսօր Հայ Ավետարանական եկեղեցին հանդիսավորապես տոնախմբում է հիմնադրման 175-ամյակը:

Հայ Ավետարանական եկեղեցին սկզբնավորվեց Օսմանյան կայսրության մայրաքաղաք Կոստանդնուպոլիսում 19-րդ դարի երկրորդ քառորդին՝ մեր ժողովրդի նկատմամբ սաստկացող բռնությունների ու հալածանքների ժամանակաշրջանում: Թուրքական իշխանությունների կողմից ծրագրված և իրագործված Հայոց ցեղասպանության հետևանքները Առաքելական Մայր Եկեղեցու հետ կրեց նաև Հայ Ավետարանական եկեղեցին:

Հայաստյաց նույն քաղաքականությունը դրսևորվեց արցախյան 44-օրյա պատերազմի ընթացքում, երբ Թուրքիայի բացահայտ աջակցությամբ Ադրբեջանը լայնածավալ ռազմական գործողություններ իրականացրեց մեր ժողովրդի դեմ: Պատերազմի պատճառած կորուստների և արհավիրքների հետևանքով մեր երկիրը ներկայիս գտնվում է ներքին և արտաքին լրջագույն մարտահրավերների առջև, որոնց հնարավոր է դիմակայել ազգային միասնականությամբ: Գոհունակությամբ ենք անդրադառնում, որ Հայ Ավետարանական եկեղեցու նոր ղեկավարության հետ ներկայիս ձևավորվել են բարի հարաբերություններ, որոնք արդյունավորվում են գործակցային սերտ շփումներով: Այսօր պարտք ունենք՝ մեր ժողովրդի գավակներին, հատկապես մեր երկրի համար առկա ծանր պայմաններում, անկախ իրենց դավանական տարբերություններից, քաջալերել և խրախուսել ամենայն նվիրումով ներդրում բերելու՝ հայրենիքը դժվարին իրավիճակից դուրս հանելու, ներդրությունները հաղթահարելու և միասնաբար մեր ապահով ու լուսավոր գալիքը կերտելու համար:

«Եղե՛ք համախորհուրդ, կարեկից, եղբայրասեր» (Ա. Պետ. 3.8). առաքյալի այս պատգամի վրա պիտի խարսխված լինի Քրիստոսապատվեր մեր ծառայությունը: Մերը առ Աստված, առ հայրենին և մեր ժողովուրդը պիտի միշտ լինի մեր հոգևոր գործունեության շարժիչ ուժը՝ ամրապնդելու համար նաև մեր ազգի միասնականությունն ու միաբանությունը:

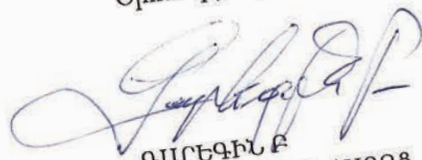
Վստահ ենք, որ Հայաստանյայց Առաքելական Սուրբ Եկեղեցու հետ Հայ Ավետարանական եկեղեցու գործակցությունը պիտի առավել զորանա՝ պատմության մեջ թողնելով նախկինում տեղ գտած անցանկալի դրսևորումներն ու տարաձայնությունները: Հայաստանյայց Առաքելական Մայր Եկեղեցին, ինչպես

վերջին տասնամյակներին, այսօր ևս շարունակելու է փոխգործակցությունը Հայ Ավետարանական եկեղեցու հետ այն բոլոր նախաձեռնությունների շրջանակներում, որոնք ուղղված են հայության ազգային-հոգևոր կյանքի զորացմանը:

Աղոթում ենք առ Ամենակալն Աստված, որ Իր Ամենախնամ Սուրբ Աջի հովանու ներքո անվտանգության մեջ պահպանի հայրենի մեր երկիրը և առաջնորդի մեր ժողովրդին դեպի խաղաղ, ապահով ու բարօր հանգրվաններ: Թող Տիրոջ երկնառաք օրհնությունները սփռվեն ի հայրենիս և ի սփյուռս աշխարհի համայն հայության կյանքում՝ զորացնելով ազգիս հավատքի, հույսի ու սիրտ մեջ: Այս առիթով Հայրապետական Մեր օրհնությունն ու աղոթքն ենք բերում Հայ Ավետարանական եկեղեցու սպասավորներին և հավատացյալներին:

Մեր Տեր և Փրկիչ Հիսուս Քրիստոսի սերը, ողորմությունը և շնորհները թող լինեն ձեզ հետ և ամենքի, այսօր և միշտ. ամեն:

Օրհնությամբ՝



ԳԱՐԵԳԻՆ Բ

ԿԱԹՈՂԻԿՈՍ ԱՄԵՆԱՅՆ ՀԱՅՈՑ



175th Anniversary of the Armenian Evangelical Church:

What is our vision and what is its raison d'être?

By **Nazareth E. Darakjian, M.D.**, *President of AMAA*

An event that took place 175 years ago in Constantinople involving 40 people (37 men and 3 women), started a movement that changed the lives of hundreds of thousands of Armenians, and made a significant impact on the history of the Armenian Church and the Armenian nation.

A religious revival in the early days of the 19th century brought together a group of people to form a society of the pious whose aim was to understand the Bible better and implement its teachings in their daily lives. This did not go well with the ruling authorities of the Armenian Orthodox Church as they responded with the infamous anathema essentially kicking members of the society out of the Armenian Orthodox Church. To be left without a recognized church was a major blow to the members of that group. This would essentially prevent them from baptizing their children, and having no communion, no weddings, and no proper burial for their dead. On July 1, 1846, the Armenian Evangelical Church was born and received recognition from the Ottoman government of those days under the name of “Protestant Milletti” or Protestant Community of the Ottoman Empire.

A division in the Church never has a good outcome but it is not up to us today to lay blame on one party or the other for what happened 175 years ago. On this occasion, however, it would be appropriate to enumerate some of the positive contributions that the Armenian Evangelical Community brought to the life of the Armenian nation.

Soon after its formation, this new church was busy translating the Bible to the Western Armenian dialect that would enable people to read and understand the most important book in their possession. The ability to read and understand the Bible contributed to spiritual growth and helped spread the religious revival

to the far corners of Armenia. As an unintended consequence, the spread of the Western Armenian Bible strengthened and purified the Western Armenian language and established its grammar. We should also mention that Armenian Evangelicals started the first periodical in the Western Armenian vernacular in Turkey.

Armenian Evangelicals were also busy building schools in every town and village across Historical Armenia. Up until the Genocide of 1915 hundreds of schools of various levels as well as colleges and theological seminaries were established over a span of 70 years. Everything was lost following the Genocide and deportation of Armenians from their historical Homeland. No time was wasted however, as schools and churches were rebuilt in the Diaspora communities especially in Syria and Lebanon. In 1955, the Haigazian College (later University) was established in Beirut which to this day is the only Armenian University in the Diaspora.

Several Armenian Evangelical pastors dedicated a good portion of their time and material resources to take care of the orphans from the Genocide. Revs. Hovhannes Eskijian and Aharon Shirajian are known to have saved the lives of thousands of orphans from certain death. Revs. Krikor Baghdasarian and Haroutune Hallajian maintained orphanages in Turkey prior to the Genocide. Rev. Yenovk Hadidian was instrumental in establishing the Armenian Sanatorium of Azounieh in Lebanon. As for lay philanthropists, Vartan Jinishian and Stephen Philbosian created foundations that benefit Armenians of all persuasions.

Armenian Evangelicals as a group have stayed out of the Armenian political parties which has spared them the conflicts and sometimes fratricidal infighting that has taken place between the various Armenian political parties in the Diaspora. Armenian Evangelical churches have avoided aligning

themselves with political parties as some other Armenian Churches have. This does not mean that Armenian Evangelicals have remained passive when the enemy threatened our nation with extermination. A good example of this is the heroic resistance on Mousa Dag where Armenians of all persuasions fought together with Rev. Dikran Antreassian being one of the chief leaders of the group. Another heroic fight took place in Aintab during 1920-21 under the leadership of Adour Levonian and Avedis Kalemkiarian both well-known Armenian Evangelicals whose successful fight against the Turks saved the lives of thousands of Armenians.

The thirty-year Genocide and the forced deportations were a major blow to the Armenian Evangelical Church and Community and very similar to what happened to the rest of the Armenian nation. Many Armenian Evangelical pastors were martyred with only one example being the group of nineteen pastors that were trapped in a church and burned to death on their way to Adana in 1909. However, the death and destruction that took place in the East created a positive response in the West. In 1918, during the Annual Convention of the Armenian Evangelical Union-Eastern States in Worcester MA, the Armenian Missionary Association of America was born with the goal of rebuilding our churches, schools and communities that had been decimated. For the first 70 years of its existence, the AMAA served Armenian communities in the Diaspora. After the disastrous earthquake that hit Armenia in 1988 and the fall of the Soviet Union that soon followed, the AMAA extended its activities to the motherland also.

Today, the AMAA is active in 24 countries giving support to our churches and schools, educating the young minds of our nation, providing spiritual growth through

Continued on the following page...



The Clash of Stories

By **Rev. John Khanjian, Ph.D.**, *Former President of Haigazian University in Beirut, Lebanon*

It is a well-known fact that the Christian Church, of which the Armenian Evangelical Church is but a small component, is facing big challenges such as ethical, sociological, political, cultural, and personal in nature. In addition to the above challenges, the Armenian Evangelical Church, being uprooted from its Homeland and planted in the Diaspora, faces the danger of assimilation or drifting into the safety of the fundamentalist fold and disillusionment.

In addition to the aforementioned, all religions which have developed a grand universal story of creation and humanity's place in it are directly challenged by the story which science is presenting as astronomers peer into the depth of the cosmos or scientists probe the innermost structure of the atom. For example, the Biblical creation story which also was based on observation by the naked eye, reflects the science of the Ancient Near East of at least 5,000 years ago; it held the view of a three-leveled universe: heaven where God and heavenly beings dwell, earth where humans and animals live, and the underworld the abode of the dead and ghosts. The sun and moon were to set the time and seasons, the stars and planets are referred to as the host of heaven. It must be stated that the intention and context of the biblical narrative is religious and not pure science; its purpose is to affirm the creator as the supreme authority

and the primary source and sustainer of everything that exists.

The biblical story provided an answer to the question of origins which included the centrality of the earth that gave a sense of security to its adherents until the 16th Century, when Galileo made the heliocentric discovery and said that the earth is not the center of the universe, but the sun is the center around which the earth turns. Although he was persecuted and denounced as heretic by the Roman Catholic Church, his observation proved to be right. Since then, scientists have been exploring the universe and discovering infinite space, an ever-expanding universe, myriads of galaxies, black holes, dark energy, and tucked among these giants is a small planet called earth on which we live. Thus, we are no longer the center of the universe, but a small part of it. It is obvious that we have a clash of significant stories.

As a result of this clash, some lay people including scientists have been disillusioned and chosen an atheistic stance while others, rejecting the traditional concept of origins and of God, live by a conviction that there is a benevolent and creative Being who brought order, beauty, and harmony into the cosmos.

Now as we are celebrating the 175th Anniversary of the Armenian Evangelical Church, it is but appropriate to ask ourselves, where are we heading? At its inception, this Church was influenced not only by the Bible

but also by the scientific outlook and such humanistic values as freedom, fraternity, and equality. Before and after the Armenian massacres, we built schools next to our churches, where the light of science was taught to men and women and produced scientists, professionals, and thinkers.

The stormy political conditions in the Near East in the last half century further eroded our churches strength and depleted its membership by forcing many to immigrate to countries outside and inside the Near East whereby forcing them to live in a survival mode and raising children with a different orientation. In addition to all of these, each community is faced with problems that are unique to the country in which it finds itself. No doubt the challenges are significant if not overwhelming! In order to meet all these challenges, we could analyze, realistically, critically and inclusively where we are and where we want to go (not to sleep with wishful thinking) and consider attracting not only committed but talented young men and women, prepare them with the best education to enable them to stand in the modern world and bridge the gap between the old and the new, science and religion and speak to their congregations in a modern language and transmit and live the spirit of the Christian Gospel of love, peace, hope, and harmony in a universe led by a benevolent God. ■

Continued from previous page...

our youth camps and various activities, and providing humanitarian aid from the Near East to Armenia and Artsakh.

On this 175th Anniversary of the Armenian Evangelical Movement we can with certainty affirm that the movement is alive and well. As much as we have accomplished, we still have dreams that need to be realized.

What is the vision of the Armenian Evangelical Church and what is its *raison d'être*? Our dreams and goals are not that much different than what motivated our forefathers 175 years ago. Our wish is to see every Armenian become familiar with the Bible and be able to read it in the language that he/she understands the best. We would like every Armenian to get

to know Christ and the promise of salvation He brought to humanity by His sacrifice on the cross. We would like to see every Armenian follow Christ's teachings and live a life that will be pleasing to God.

May God lead us, guide us, and help us accomplish our goals as we look forward to more anniversaries. ■



A Church that Looks in the Mirror

By Rev. Paul Haidostian, Ph.D., President of Haigazian University in Beirut, Lebanon

The celebration of the 175th Anniversary of the Armenian Evangelical Church is both an occasion for thanksgiving, and for finding the proper mirror to look into.

It is clear why we would be **grateful** to God for the formation and development of our Church. In unlikely places, times, and ways, a church-based revival amongst our Armenian people evolved into a spirituality of renewal, an unassuming ecclesiastical structure, a wide-ranging institutional scope, a fresh ethical and even pietistic zeal, an educational and service-oriented plan and silent curriculum, and a valued approach to the life of the person, the family, the nation, and all of society. All these had their far-reaching impact in powerful ways, here pietistic, there rational, here local, and there ecumenical. Some of the above continue up to this day despite fatigue in some Armenian Evangelical systems and approaches, but also through new signs of renewal and invigoration.

It is more challenging to find the right types of **mirrors** in which we should look to evaluate the life of the church and to pave a way that brings us closer to the values of the Kingdom of God and the statutes of the Body of Christ in our post-modern and troubled new times.

The mirror is the written **Word**, our accessible text that inspires, an authority that enlivens, a truth that disciplines us through the Spirit. The Word is also the **Living Christ**, without whom there is no ecclesial existence, and no space for grace. This mirror shames us when we consider our word as the authority, and uplifts us when we follow the Lord as humble disciples who are thirsty for life in Him. This mirror is an invitation to read the Bible again and again and to search for the Lord's truth and guidance.

The mirror is what we see in the **life** of the local church and its membership. It is how the fruit of the Spirit is witnessed in the congregation as a response to the preached and lived Gospel. There is no church where the faithful are stagnant and the shepherds are self-seeking. There is no church where spiritual thirst is neglected, mission outreach is secondary, Christian communion is secularized, and where only social hunger is fed.

The mirror is the symphony of a **worshipping community**. Worship is not only praise, emotive expression, habits of religious veneration and group support. Worship is also the chance for the renewal of the mind, and the formation and disciplining of the congregation for a life of sanctity, diakonia, responsibility and mission, all in the name of and for the sake of Christ and His church.

The mirror is the **pain** of the world near us and in places afar. When the world, the Armenian world, the known world, but also the distant one is in pain, the church is called for action though mission. Pain is also present in each home and each person in relatively comfortable places too. However, the Lord invites the church to reach out and to be His caring and just hands and feet as we elevate the suffering of all humans for whom the Lord sacrificed His life.

The mirror is the style of **leadership** in planning and exemplification of what Christ wills for us. Leadership is not concentrated in only the pastoring character, but also in every faithful person who has a role to play in the congregation and around it. The church is not the experimental arena of the pastor to design based on personal style, theological preference, and general wishes. The leadership is a whole group, a prayerful team, an educated, faithful, and wise


guidance to the congregation, being mainly accountable to the Head of the Church.

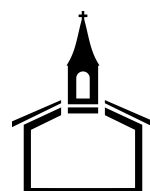
The mirror is our passion for **education** or passing on the faith and the heritage to the next generation. It is instilling in the young ones in our families, congregations, and surroundings the knowledge, the standards, the discipline, and the character that befits the children of God. Without education, the church resembles a nice-looking river that stands still, rejoices in the past but dreads the future.

The mirror is our **vision** for all people, but starting with our inner circles, and our Armenian people too, not simply a generalized vision for the whole elusive human context. One is first tested in the mirror for what one does for one's brother and sister, where integrity and attitude cannot be concealed. Then, there is a test of the wider issues and broader world as well. If one cannot show a vision for goodness and salvation for one's own, developing a vision for the distant ones, as important as it is, may be an escape from Christian integrity and responsibility.

The mirror of the church, therefore, is the **law of God** that disciplines us and the **grace of God** that saves us.

On this anniversary, may our look in the mirror be an occasion for thanksgiving and renewal.

"But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light." 1 Peter 2:9 





The Celebration of Communication

By Rev. Michel Aghamalian, Ph.D., Senior Pastor of the Armenian Evangelical Churches of Iran

An oversized Bible usually placed under a resurrection Cross, hymnbooks and Psalters in the back of pews, a piano sweetly playing the prelude in the full sight of the congregation, the sunlight coming through the windows in the peacefulness of a lovely Sunday, when the hustle-bustle of modern life gives way to the meditative worship of the Triune Presence – such is a typical Armenian Evangelical Church getting ready for her now almost two centuries old way of worshipping God in the simplicity of her liturgy. Not too old a tradition as compared with millennial old Christian churches, but old enough to have liturgical tradition of its own, which can be termed as the Celebration of Communication – a communication celebrated not only in liturgy, but also in practical ministry.


From a certain viewpoint, everything in the Armenian Evangelical Church is geared toward communication. Historically speaking, a core defining characteristic of its liturgical as well as ecclesiastical disposition has been communicating the Word of God in the most understandable way that speaks and responds to the very needs and challenges of the congregation. Thus, the worship characteristically takes place as a Word-event. As symbolized by the oversized Bible on the altar, the preaching of the Word becomes the Spirit-empowered central moment, which in the context of corporate worship communicates the divine salvific presence to the worshipers. Hence, you might often hear personal testimonies of people telling of how they have heard the voice of God amid their personal challenges as though they were personally being addressed by the preaching of the Word. Thus, everything including the way the sacraments are administered contributes to this Word-centered experience of God's presence.

This is based on a certain understanding of the nature of God as Himself being communicative and relational. As the Jesuit theologian Jon Sobrino states: "God never appears as a God-in-Himself, but as a God for history, and, therefore, as the God-of a people. 'I will be your God and you shall be my people' is Israel's confession of faith. In this, an essentially relational God is proclaimed, who reveals Himself and who is in relation to a people. ... God is a God-of, a God-for, a God-in, never a God-in-Himself."¹ From the very early days, an emphasis on communicating the Word of God in all its forms has marked the Armenian Evangelical Church's understanding of its liturgy and confession as well as its practice and mission. Thus, even the Armenian Evangelical Church's reforming attitudes should be seen in this context. This very logo-centric emphasis has led to fresh translations of the Bible and new insights into the meaning of its text and application both in corporate worship and personal devotions, as a result of which several generations of Armenian Evangelical families have come to respect and appreciate the Bible and draw on its divine wisdom in manifestly practical ways.

There is another side to this communication-based core approach, which I propose to call incarnational communication through cross-shaped ministry, by which I mean the Armenian Evangelical Church's understanding and practice of mission, the very willingness to go beyond the walls of the church to serve people in real solidarity and sympathy, and thus communicating the life-giving love and redemptive care of God to those in pain and suffering. The Church's diaconal ministry is thus carried out in true incarnational sense, as it reaches to people and communities, especially in less fortunate places. However, it should be mentioned

that, despite some unfounded misrepresentations, the Armenian Evangelical Church does not appreciate an instrumentalized approach to diaconal ministry or humanitarian aid as a cover-up means for proselytizing "sheep-stealing" agenda! Communicating the loving care of God to those in need is a genuine outcome of its core theological affirmations, an embodiment of what it believes about divine love and mercy reaching out to image-bearing humanity. This is all very clearly attested by the ministry of the Armenian Evangelical Church both during and in the aftermath of the Armenian Genocide and its visible presence in several areas of the national life of the Armenian people both in Armenia and the Diaspora.

Another equally important area, where a communicative approach is employed is in the context of inter-church and inter-faith relationships. Despite the common assumptions, the words "evangelical" or "missionary" do not stand in the way of genuine ecumenical and inter-faith dialogues with other churches or faith traditions, as they do not denote a disposition of the Armenian Evangelical Church to convert adherents of other faith traditions. On the other hand, the Church is by no means compromising and acts in full accord with its confession of and faith in the saving lordship of Jesus Christ.

As the Armenian Evangelical Church celebrates the 175th Anniversary of its founding, may the power of Spirit equip this worldwide body of Christ to keep communicating His truth and loving mercy through prayerful and meditative as well as practical and incarnational ministry. 

¹ Sobrino, J., 1994. Jesus the Liberator. Tunbridge Wells: Burns & Oates, pp.68-69



175th Anniversary of the Armenian Evangelical Movement:

A Time to Celebrate...and Reflect

By Arthur H. Salibian, M.D.

Celebration of the Armenian Evangelical Movement's 175th Anniversary is a time to remember the history of the Movement, commemorate the legacy of its leaders, and be joyful about what the reform Movement has stood for. In celebrating, it is also necessary to reflect on the changes the Movement has gone through, particularly in its recent history.

The history of the Armenian Evangelical Movement may be divided into three periods: 1) its inception in the Ottoman Empire in 1864 until the 1915 Armenian Genocide, 2) growth of the churches in the Middle East and North America from 1916 to the turn of the century, and 3) the 21st century. Each of these periods has its own characteristics that define what the Movement represented.

Education Compliments Faith

The first period in the Ottoman Empire is characterized by a desire to gain insight into biblical interpretation and acquire a broad-based higher education that included the sciences. American missionaries, under the auspices of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, played a crucial role in cultivating Armenian Evangelicals in the reformed faith as well as the prevailing scientific advances.¹ This was an education that was based on Western mainstream Congregational and Presbyterian values. As a result, numerous high schools, colleges and seminaries were established throughout Anatolia. In doing so, a future generation of clergy and lay people were prepared to guide the Armenian Evangelical Movement into its post-Genocide home in the Middle East.

The second period stands out as one in which the churches and related educational institutions flourished in Lebanon and Syria because of the governments' tolerant atti-

tude toward education and the proximity of these institutions to the leading university in the Near East, the American University of Beirut. Armenians studying in high schools, Haigazian College, now Haigazian University, and Near East School of Theology had access to the degrees and courses available at the American University of Beirut. Armenian Evangelical liberal education in these institutions helped Armenian Evangelicals to identify with their past mentors and leaders. Also, the establishment of the Armenian Evangelical Union of the Near East in 1921, and the sending out of seminarians and clergy to North America to further their education or serve in the churches, kept the Evangelical Movement's heritage alive.

In North America, the Armenian Evangelical churches have had a unique history of their own since the establishment of the first church, The Armenian Congregational Church of Martyrs in Worcester, Massachusetts, in 1881. Armenian Evangelicals concentrated on the East and West Coasts established their own Unions in 1901 and 1908 respectively, eventually merging to form the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America (AEUNA) in 1971.² The churches that numbered 20 in the 1970s grew to more than 30 by the late 1990s.

A distinctive feature of the early churches in North America was their vision to establish in 1918 a separate missionary association, the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA), to financially assist refugees of the Armenian Genocide.³ AMAA's mission that started as a refugee focused mission developed into an organization with multifaceted worldwide missions to evangelize, help the poor, as well as establish and support Evangelical churches and educational institutions.

The expansion of church membership under AEUNA and the success of AMAA's

missions gives us the opportunity to celebrate and reflect on our 175-year history. Reflection, when compared to celebration, however, covers a broader timeline that includes not only the past but the present and the future. The situation of the churches in the 21st century, the third period, should be understood to determine what should be done to remain faithful to the Armenian Evangelical Movement's heritage and secure its future.

Crises of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in the 21st Century

The changes that took place in the Armenian Evangelical churches in North America in the late 1990s appeared to be successful in that the number of churches joining AEUNA grew by 30 percent and church membership peaked to more than 5,000 members.⁴ AEUNA's "new" program seemed to be moving in the right direction. This altered new program sent seminarians to Fundamentalist institutions in the United States, allowing them to embrace radicalized theologies that opposed those of mainstream Evangelical churches.⁵ Ultimately, the change of course led to the breakdown of the Armenian Evangelical churches' belief system. Theological controversies within the churches could not be reconciled, and dissension among congregants escalated, thereby exacerbating church desertions. Within a short period of ten years (2010-2020), Armenian Evangelical church membership dropped by more than 50%, pulpit vacancies grew, and youth participation in the churches dwindled. AEUNA witnessed these events with concern but could not stop the accelerated demise of the churches.

Fortunately, AEUNA acknowledged the crisis and resolved to study the deteriorating situation in the churches by creating a Task Force in December 2019 to develop a

2-year program to “reconstruct” and revitalize the churches. This “congregant oriented” program was to engage the larger Armenian Evangelical Community for ways to “re-build” the churches. The first phase of the Task Force’s project (Listen and Discover) is proceeding well and will be followed by deliberations to formulate ideas and implement them.⁶ The Evangelical community is looking forward to the Task Force’s recommendations for “strengthening and uniting” the churches.

Absence of an Armenian Evangelical Theology

In its quest to unite the churches, the Task Force has to clarify, among other things, the theology of the Armenian Evangelical Movement and determine whether it can be used to reform and unite the churches. This clarification should take the form of a new Statement of Faith/Creed for the 21st century. The professed 1846 Armenian Evangelical “Statement of Faith” has obviously not united the churches. It is hoped that AEUNA will take on the arduous task of formulating a new creed.

Rev. Giragos H. Chopourian, Ph.D. addressed the dilemma of an Armenian Evangelical Creed in 1986, on the occasion of the 140th Anniversary of the Armenian Evangelical Movement:

Does the Armenian Evangelical Church have a formulated updated Creed to which one can go for instruction? Technically speaking, the answer has to be in the negative. No Theologian has written on the Theology of the Armenian Evangelical Church. We have no specifically formulated, researched and written creed. That is because the Armenian Evangelical is satisfied by his ability to refer to **The Book**; and by the facility by which he can refer to the general prevailing Evangelical tenets of the main Protestant Denominations and the Lutheran Reformation.⁷

As Executive Director of AMAA in 1986, Rev. Chopourian presented this challenge on behalf of AMAA to the Armenian Evangelical churches and the Armenian communities in North America as a ministry of evangelism and teaching. Of interest is Rev. Chopourian’s reference to Armenian Evangelicals’ reliance on “main Protestant Denominations,” intimating that it was time

for Armenian Evangelicals to have their own contemporary Creed. Can AMAA today present a similar challenge to AEUNA regarding the crisis in the churches?

AMAA Vows to Provide Spiritual Support to the Churches


AMAA should recall what its founding member, Rev. Antranig A. Bedikian, had to say about the relationship between AMAA and AEUNA in his inaugural address on June 7, 1918:

...Today we may not fully understand the significance of the proposed Missionary Association, but in the near future, I am sure, we will see the glory of the panorama of this organization. One of the *avowed goals* of this Association is to *keep alive* the Armenian Evangelical Church. God willing, with our material and *spiritual support*, we shall *strengthen our churches in America*, as well as those in the overseas (Italics mine).⁸

Rev. Bedikian understood the importance of AMAA’s role in the *spiritual* guidance and support of the churches. This understanding was taken for granted for more than 80 years because AEUNA clergy occupied leadership positions in AMAA. With the weakening influence of clergy in AMAA’s affairs and the increased independence of both organizations, their partnership weakened, and AMAA’s avowed role in the spiritual life of the churches was neglected.

Now that AEUNA has formed a Task Force to rebuild the churches, will AMAA form its own Task Force to examine whether it can play a role in the spiritual revitalization of the churches? Will the combined effort of both organizations to formulate a new

creed reverse the deteriorating conditions in the churches?

The experiment of uniting the churches and its leaders “...within an ecclesiastical fellowship...,” as stated on AEUNA’s website, has failed. Instead, the theology of the Armenian Evangelical Movement should be defined and modernized, using it as a foundation to unite the churches. AEUNA and AMAA should partner this effort to articulate a contemporary Statement of Faith, basing it on the theology of past leaders whose ideals we extoll today. 

1. Missions of the A.B.C.F. in Turkey, Constantinople, 1904. <http://www.dlir.org/archive/archive/files/5ce87493859557903aa95cc9918f4527.pdf>
2. Vahan H. Tootikian, *The Armenian Evangelical Church: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow* (Southfield, MI: Armenian Heritage Committee, 1996), 79-80.
3. Vahan H. Tootikian, *The Genesis and Early Development of the Armenian Missionary Association of America* (Southfield, MI: Armenian Heritage Committee, 2018), 43.
4. Arthur H. Salibian, *Armenian Evangelicals’ Challenge to Religious Extremism: The Growing Influence of Fundamentalism in Armenian Evangelical Churches* (CreateSpace, Scotts Valley, CA, 2015), 56.
5. *Ibid.*, 11-12.
6. <https://www.aeuna.org> (Vision Project, AEUNA Rebuilding Project, 2022)
7. Giragos H. Chopourian, *Fundamental Armenian Evangelical Teachings*, 1989. <http://www.muncherian.com/r-giragoschopourian-fundamental.html>
8. Vahan H. Tootikian, *The Genesis and Early Development of the Armenian Missionary Association of America* (Southfield, MI: Armenian Heritage Committee, 2018), 40.





Looking Around, Looking Ahead

By **Rev. L. Nishan Bakalian**, *Coordinator of Church Relations of UAECNE*

With only a brief quarter-century left until the 200th Anniversary of the Evangelical Church of Armenia, now is the time to frankly assess where our Church has been, where it is today, and especially to think carefully and strategically about where it is headed. Are we willing to do this in a way that will help the Armenian Evangelical Church emerge from its current identity crises and existential difficulties, and present a heritage to those born today, the 25-year-olds of 2047, and offer them a clear trajectory for the calling Christ has given our Church?

We must honestly admit that few in our churches – pastors of all ages, lay leaders, and church members young and old – know their history well, and therefore few appreciate its importance as we look to the future. The Armenian Evangelical Church was born in a time of intellectual ferment among the Armenians of the Ottoman Empire and was merely one expression of that heady environment. Though the wealthy class and the ecclesiastical leadership under their direction reacted negatively, many Armenians recognized in the Armenian Evangelical Church a reclamation of the freedom of conscience and personal conviction that would enable the Armenian people to flourish. History shows that the first forty members of the church knew their divine calling: to bring a Gospel orientation to every aspect of the life of the Armenian people. Evidence: the multiplication of Armenian Evangelical educational institutions in disparate corners of the region, serving as leaven, enabling progress in the thought life and the well-being of all strata of Armenian communities, irrespective of religious affiliation.

Successive attacks by Ottoman Turkish officials on their Armenian citizens

beginning in the late 1800s turned the focus of the Armenian Evangelical Church and its international partners toward relief and reconstruction efforts. This crucial turning point altered the outlook of the Church. Yet, out of these catastrophes the Armenian Evangelical Church in North America birthed the Armenian Missionary Association of America, which from the outset aimed to reconstitute the religious and educational life of the decimated communities. With the heroic efforts of Armenian Evangelicals in the Near East, strengthened by the financial support of the AMAA, the Church rescued the remnants of a flourishing ministry and helped guide the Armenian nation into a productive, forward-looking element throughout the Middle East.

Yet, there was also a weakening of the challenge of nation-building to which the first Armenian Evangelical leaders had risen. A donor/recipient model became entrenched in the relationships between the Western portions of the Armenian Evangelical Church and those in the Middle East. After an initial outpouring of effort in multi-faceted service to the Armenian community, efforts turned to maintenance, as emigration from lands near the Homeland continued apace, and institutions and ministries were forced to operate with decreasing personnel. Few were able to look forward with a vision for development and progress.

At the same time, the Armenian Evangelical churches in the West became centered on purely ecclesiastical activity, with a lessening focus on standing with the entire Armenian people. This, too, was a type of a Diasporan “maintenance mode.” With demographic changes in their young members, Armenian Evangelical churches often strove to become an Armenian version of a local community church or denomination, even to the point where some doubted

the necessity of the Armenian language or questioned the need to write “Armenian” in their church name.

Successive unrest, wars, and the 1988 earthquake in Armenia as well as the Artsakh war of that same time period stirred the Armenian Evangelical Church to reconnect to its cultural roots and search for ways of strengthening Armenia. Yet this, too, was fraught with risks of further entrenching the donor/recipient model, with which the Church struggles to this day. Its unique identity and calling remained in the background. The confusion in Armenia of whether the Church is a cult, and Armenia’s confusion over its name (“Missionary” or “Evangelical” – only one letter difference in Armenian) point to the need to deepen an awareness of the Church’s history, heritage, past and current contributions for the common good.

Today’s Armenian Evangelical Church tends to minimize the distinctives that would make it a blessing and a challenge to the Armenian nation, while aligning itself with globalized church movements. For example, whereas there was an effort in the 1970s through the 1990s to bring Armenian-style music into the Armenian Evangelical worship life, today there is a pervasive satisfaction for using western “worship music” with Armenian words, not unlike the domination of western melodies from the 19th century with Armenian or Turkish words. In the earlier as well as the latter instances, our Church has practically turned its back on the centuries of musical and literary spirituality available to it, which has nourished the Armenian nation from its earliest times. It has also widened the gulf between it and the great majority of the Armenian people to whom God has called it to serve.

Continued on the following page...



Archiving 175 Years of History and Beyond

By Vahram Shemmassian, Ph.D., Professor and Director of Armenian Studies Program, California State University, Northridge

Celebrating a milestone is a reminder of an important accomplishment in the life of an individual or an entity. But memory in which that marker is anchored, if not recorded and stored, fades. How, then, would a future watershed event be heralded in the absence of hard evidence?

In the case of churches, besides recounting the collective life experiences of the faithful, preserved records first and foremost tell the story of God among men. To what extent have Armenian Evangelical primary sources been saved, cataloged, digitized and/or made accessible to interested parties to disseminate that narrative?

We too often come across documents that belong to organizations but are found in the possession of individuals. As generations pass, the significance of those documents may certainly diminish if not evaporate altogether. Consequently, they may end up in the dustbin of history.

Have churches made an effort to reveal and reclaim them? Have museum-type objects like miscellaneous memorabilia been maintained for exhibits and other use? Have pictures and films/documentaries been indexed with attendant explanations? Are we aware of the existence and whereabouts of records pertaining to attempts at rapprochement with the Armenian Apostolic Church? Do we know that the Near East School of Theology (NEST) archives in Beirut contain the minutes of the annual meetings of the Armenian Evangelical Union in the Near East (Cilicia, Syria, Lebanon, Egypt) both before and after the Genocide, mostly written in Ottoman Turkish with Armenian script? What is the fate of Prof. Armenag Haigazian's—after whom Haigazian College, now University, has been named—letters, photos, and even the pocket watch inherited by his relatives? How to persuade an individual to relinquish the large corpus of materials pertaining to Rev. Aharon Shirajian that he holds? The list goes on.

We assume that churches zealously and meticulously keep their records. We are also cognizant that the Armenian Evangelical World Council has had discussions in this regard and that an initiative has already been taken by embarking on a pilot project of digitizing historical records. The AMAA rightly supports and joins the effort. A pursuit of this nascent campaign will indeed be a tremendous service, in fact, a most valuable perpetual self-gift, one that encourages the five Armenian Evangelical Unions and their affiliated churches to render their archives in electronic format, retrieve certain “hidden” items from individuals/families, and share information in a concerted manner. This is a tall order that requires perseverance for the preservation of the rich history and future achievements of the Armenian Evangelical Church within the larger context of the tough road that the Armenian nation has arduously but triumphantly traversed and will continue to do so under God's watchful gaze. 🇬🇪

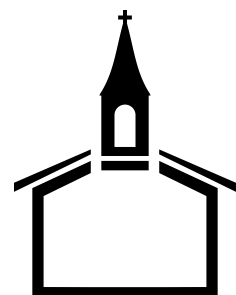
Continued from previous page...

Part of the reason for today's situation rests in the Armenian Evangelical Church's lack of a unified training ground for those following God's call to Christian ministry. With each Union preparing its leaders in locations it finds appropriate, Armenian Evangelical pastors find less and less in common as co-workers in God's Armenian field. The Near East School of Theology in Beirut is the closest thing we have to an “Armenian Evangelical institution” and being located within the Near East Union its students, whether from the region or from Armenia, gain an Armenian Evangelical outlook during their studies. Yet, as an institution, it offers little preparation for pastors preparing to serve in the Armenian context.

And along with God's guidance, contextual theology is key to the vitality and growth of our beloved Church.

Though difficult, these issues are necessary to consider. We must enter these hard places in order to dialogue with one another. They bear sober consideration if the Armenian Evangelical Church wishes to live to see its 200th Anniversary, and not become loosely affiliated prayer houses in various countries throughout the world. Elsewise the Armenian Evangelical churches would best use their efforts toward rapid assimilation into their surroundings. Certainly, part of our Church's calling is to be a light and a blessing to the communities where they exist throughout the Diaspora; but it must

do so with a clear sense of who it is, where it has come from, and what it needs to do to take up Christ's call to it, and be a vital and engaged part of the Armenian nation, facing all of that worldwide community's challenges and hopes with a deep trust in the guidance of God's Spirit. 🇬🇪





Armenian Evangelical Convictions

By Rev. Hendrik Shanazarian, Minister to AEUNA

“What is the difference between our church and the Armenian Orthodox Church?” This is a sincere question I have been asked by many who found out that I am an Armenian Evangelical Pastor. In fact, to my surprise, sometimes even Evangelical church members ask me this same question. I am sure you all have friends or colleagues who have made similar inquiries upon discovering that you attend an Armenian Evangelical Church. On the occasion of the 175th Anniversary of the establishment of the Armenian Evangelical Church, I want to remind everyone of some basic tenets of our beliefs and teachings.

1. Scripture Alone or “Sola Scriptura”

One of the basic beliefs of the Armenian Evangelical Church is that the Holy Scriptures are the only and unchangeable basis of our faith and action. 2nd Timothy 3:16-17 says: “*All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*” The main responsibility of the Church is to preach and teach the Word of God in a language comprehensible to those who hear it. The Sacred Fathers of our nation St. Sahag and St. Mesrob knew that “... *faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.*” Romans 10:17 They worked hard to make the Scriptures available to our people in their vernacular (mother) tongue, so they could hear about and understand the path to salvation and believe. History and tradition are important, and we need to learn and teach about these things, but any thought, idea, habit or custom related to our faith and lifestyle should be tested by the Word of God. That is the one and only reliable foundation for our faith.

2. Faith Alone and Grace Alone or “Sola Fide” and “Sola Gratia”

We believe Christ is the only path to salvation for humanity and salvation is attainable only through faith in Him. In Ephesians 2:8-10 we read: “*For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God — not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*” Forgiveness comes to us through faith in Christ. It is by believing in Him and accepting His salvific work on the cross on our behalf that we are reconciled with God, not through works. Human beings are lost in sin and deserving of punishment. God, through the life, death, and resurrection of His Son, offers forgiveness and justifies those who believe. Salvation is a gift from God. It results from the experience of His grace and is not a reward for good works. Following Christ’s example by loving and caring for people and serving them with godly love, is very important. Yet these actions are the fruit of salvation, the result of the fellowship we have with Him as a result of the forgiveness we receive by faith in Christ. More than agreeing with a set of doctrines and teachings, the Christian faith is walking humbly with God the Father who revealed Himself to us through His Son.

3. The Priesthood of All Believers (1 Peter 2:5)

The most important task of a priest in the Old Testament was to be a mediator between God and His people. He offered sacrifices on their behalf for the forgiveness of their sins in order to reconcile them with God. The New Testament reveals that the

person who believes in Christ and His redemptive death on the cross becomes a child of God. This person also receives the Holy Spirit and a call from God to be His witness (Acts 1:8). In other words, it is no longer necessary to connect with God through a mediator. Christ has become our one and only mediator. He is the only person in whom we can find forgiveness for our sins. We go directly to Him to confess our sins and enjoy His grace.

It is true that God does call some to dedicate their lives fully for spiritual ministry, but this does not make them a special class or give them higher standing. They are not holier or closer to God. Christians can pursue a vocation as a teacher, carpenter, lawyer, doctor, mechanic, or minister and still live as a dynamic witness, in word and in action, to the Gospel of salvation. Doctors specialize in a field and their opinions on medical issues are respected. By the same token, a pastor’s or Bible teacher’s words are to be considered valuable in the area of spiritual life. Yet, all Christians are equal in the sense that they are all in need of salvation, are all saved by God’s grace, have all been given gifts for ministry from God and are all called to be witnesses. Some have the call to work and serve as pastors, but this does not make them better or spiritually superior to anyone else.

Every human being is created in the image of God who desires to have a personal relationship with them. While we are called to care and reach out to all people, we also realize that we have been born into a uniquely ethnic Armenian community and that we have a special calling to reach out to our fellow Armenians. As Armenians, we have a rich culture and history. Since the year 301,

Continued on the following page...



The Armenian Evangelical Church and Character Building

By Hasmig Baran, Ed.D., Professor in the International Studies Department at California State University, Northridge

On the occasion of the 175th Anniversary of the founding of the Armenian Evangelical Church, I would like to reflect upon my Armenian Evangelical roots and experiences that shaped my identity throughout my developmental years and guided my adult life.

I consider myself fortunate to have been born in a family where both of my parents, Bedros and Aznive Piloyan Kellikian, were active members of the Armenian Evangelical Bethel Church in Aleppo, Syria. I, along with my sisters Sona and Nora, attended Sunday School while our parents worshiped in the church. We sang hymns, learned Bible verses, recited psalms, and anxiously waited for Oryort Gadarine Guleuzian to begin her storytelling that captivated us all. Those childhood experiences are vividly etched in my fond memories.

As I grew older, I joined the Armenian Evangelical Christian Endeavor groups, first, by becoming a member of Krisdoneagan Badanyats Engeragtsutyun (teen association) and then Krisdoneagan Chanits Engeragtsutyun (youth association). The Armenian Evangelical Bethel Church and

its affiliated school became the hub of my spiritual, intellectual, physical, and leadership development as we engaged in miscellaneous activities. We immersed ourselves in Bible study and prayer meetings that allowed us to grow spiritually. We had a book club that exposed us to the enlightening world of literature. We had general knowledge contests among sister church youth groups that carried us beyond the narrow confines of our daily lives into the wider universe. The adage “A healthy mind in a healthy body” was achieved through basketball, volleyball, and ping-pong, with sportsmanship shaping our character in the process. We joined the church choir, caroled on Christmas Eve, and staged dramas, thereby honing our talents. In short, it was a very healthy environment for body and soul to mature in Christian fellowship. All this has become part of the moral compass that has guided me in my adult life.

As we live in a rapidly changing and morally declining world, our values are constantly challenged. Public education, for one, has become, to some extent, part of the problem rather than the solution. It is open to all sorts of ideas and discus-

sions in the name of freedom of expression except for religion. Therefore, children are deprived of the element of spirituality that creates an imbalance in their overall wellness. This lack may ultimately interfere in identity development and achievement in adolescents. On the other hand, adolescents exposed to religious teachings tend to have social competence, positive peer relations, emotional regulation, and positive behavior, among other advantages.

In this general context, the role of the Church, and in our case the Armenian Evangelical Church, becomes of paramount importance to one's moral development, identity formation, and finding purpose in life. Therefore, the Armenian Evangelical Church should enhance its efforts in buttressing Christian values and character in youth so that they may be able to endure the dangerous currents facing them. We all share the responsibility of combatting evil forces as they try to deconstruct man who is created in the image of God.

As the Apostle Paul exhorts us, “Let your roots grow down into Him. Let your lives be built on Him.” Colossians 2:7

Continued from previous page...

both our culture and history have been impacted and shaped by our Christian faith and by living. Learning our culture and history will help us better serve our people.

Yet, when it comes to our relationship with our Creator and Lord, we need to remember that through Christ and only through Him can we be cleansed from our sins and become children of God. We are forgiven by God's grace through faith and receive power and direction from Him to live lives that serve and honor Him. Science may reveal secrets and laws that exist at the heart of God's creation which are beneficial

for our life and existence. But the Scriptures are the only authentic source of Truth that can result in saving faith. It is the only foundation upon which we can confidently build every aspect of our individual and communal lives.

As we celebrate the 175th Anniversary of the birth of the Armenian Evangelical Church, may we grasp the tremendous responsibility we have to carry on the call of our Lord, and the vision of our forefathers who sowed the seeds of the message of God's grace, Christ's love, death and resurrection in so many hearts, which

brought so much fruit and transformed our nation. May our Lord give us wisdom and humility to sincerely and critically evaluate our current situation, join around a common vision of reaching out to our nation with the message of the Gospel, serving our people by every means and resources God has gifted us. May we find ways to cooperate and work together with all Churches and institutions that share our vision and who are willing to join efforts to care for the spiritual and physical needs of our people wherever and whenever we see the need and the opportunity.



The Needed Epiphany

But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. 2 Corinthians 4:7

By Harout Nercessian, AMAA Representative in Armenia

The glorious days of Armenian Evangelical vitality, powerful testimony, and influence are now behind us. We can see them in the rearview mirrors offered by church historians. Causes may be found in the allure of physical comfort along with the daily pressures of life that have derailed our minds from the immeasurable value of the Gospel-treasure, which our pioneers passed down to us. The remedy needs to be sought in the epiphany experienced by the pioneers.

Paul refers to the Gospel of Christ as the unveiled “treasure” (2 Corinthians 4:7) for which he denounced his long-held pharisaic ideology; went against the powerful Jewish establishment; endured unbearable physical, mental and emotional agony; was severely persecuted; and eventually surrendered his soul at a politically motivated execution.

Was Paul thinking clearly? What was so special about this “treasure?” What could it offer that led Paul to renounce his pre-conversion, prestigious religious rank and the life of wealth, comfort and respect that came with it?

The Armenian Evangelical pioneers also discovered this “treasure,” and chose to act according to its surpassing value despite the risks. They renounced cowardly apathy, indifference and conformity. Their highly educated minds were stunned and captivated by this unveiled “treasure” that had neutralized Paul’s defenses. They too, for the sake of the Gospel, endured unbearable socio-economic hardships. They were ostracized and denied civil rights such as marriages, burials and baptisms; even their businesses were boycotted.

So, what is so exceptional about this “light of the knowledge of God’s glory,” which over the past two millennia, Christians have carried in their “jars of clay?”

Let us review the blessings of the Gospel of our salvation.

In addition to offering us forgiveness, the Gospel liberates us from the shackles of sin, which morph into destructive forces such as mistrust, insecurity, fear, selfishness, hatred, hypocrisy, jealousy, greed, conflicts, manipulation and the worship of gods such as status symbols.

The Gospel enlightens our minds and souls to the Truth Who sets us free to pursue genuine fulfillment in healthy, trust-based and mutually uplifting relationships. The Gospel disentangles our minds from the lies of sin to find security in God, profound fulfillment in His love, personal value in His applause, and life-meaning in His service. It places us on the pedestal of “love, power and self-control.”

The Gospel transforms those it captures into constantly maturing Christians, who are devoted to making the world a better place.

Gospel-based faith communities offer love, security and a sense of belonging. They raise men and women of faith, who live both as “light” and “salt,” attracting many to this treasure. The church of Christ enables believers to fulfill their higher-level needs for “love and belonging, esteem and self-actualization,” as postulated by American psychologist Abraham Maslow.

The Gospel is inconceivably precious to those who have been touched by it. They deem it worthy of all their resources – money, time, efforts, talents and more. Both Paul and the Armenian Evangelical pioneers lived out this faith.

How about us?

The last few decades have witnessed significant diminishing potency in Armenian

Evangelical churches. Jesus’ parable of the sower hints at indifference, “trouble or persecution [and] worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth,” as probable causes.

The remedy is to be found in the life-changing epiphany experienced by Paul, the pioneers, and countless Christians throughout the centuries. Paul argues for this most poignantly when he urges us to grasp the vastness of Christ’s love. He implores that we may have the “wisdom and revelation” to grasp “the riches of his glorious inheritance.” We need to be overwhelmed with the unfathomable value of the Gospel-treasure. The Gospel-truth needs to permeate each and every one of our brain cells, while overwhelming, disarming, and expelling all alluring gods. The Gospel-truth will thus transform our minds, emotions and behavior.

This epiphany will compel us to “sell” all our possessions and buy the “field” where the Gospel truth is “buried” (Matthew 13:44). All other possessions will seem as “loss” and “rubbish” in comparison (Philippians 3:8). The all-time favorite hymn best articulates Paul’s thinking: “Turn your eyes upon Jesus... and the things of earth will grow strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace.”

Today we enjoy the many blessings of God thanks to the Gospel-truth, which the Armenian Evangelical pioneers and their followers graciously passed down to us at the unaffordable cost of lost prestige, dignity, time, money, comfort, and more. Our children deserve no less. Christ and the example of the pioneers compels us to pass down churches that are more authentic, thriving and potent than the ones we inherited. Our children deserve the life-changing taste of the untainted Gospel-treasure.

We have no right to remain indifferent and be content with the status quo.

But first, let us pray for and seek the epiphany. 🌿



Generations Proclaiming Praise

Then your people, the sheep of your pasture, will praise you forever; from generation to generation, we will proclaim your praise. Psalm 70:13

By Rev. Calvin Sagherian, Moderator of AEUNA and Senior Pastor of Calvary Armenian Congregational Church of San Francisco, CA

As I reflect on the anniversary of the Armenian Evangelical Movement, I am struck by the fact that four generations of evangelical pastors from the same family continue to proclaim God's praise! How is that possible? Aren't pastors' kids supposed to rebel? It is clearly all due to God's faithfulness, demonstrated through His grace. *"For the Lord is good and His love endures forever; His faithfulness continues through all generations."* Psalm 100:5

I also attribute the passing of the torch of the Gospel to what the Psalmist says, *"One generation commends your works to another; they tell of your mighty acts."* Psalm 145:4 God's goodness and our faithfulness to proclaim the Gospel surely work together in an amazing way.

My grandfather, Rev. Sisag Manougian, served first as a Pastor in Adana, but when he was deported, God called him to serve in a variety of ways as the need was great. While in Turkey, he planted several churches, Sunday Schools and day schools. For some time, he was Secretary of YMCA for relief work. He also was invited by the American Relief Board to deliver financial relief to orphans. So, he embarked on a series of tours of evangelism, aid, and recovery of Armenian children. I was always enthralled by the stories of his horseback ministry adventures. He was said to have planted 33 churches, the exact number of times he had escaped death at the hands of the Turkish regime! Eventually he settled with his family in Aleppo then Beirut and served in churches there.

My father, Rev. Hagop Sagherian, miraculously survived the Genocide despite near starvation, and was privileged to serve the Lord in Armenian Evangelical churches. His journey began in Tyre and in Cyprus. Later in Beirut he became Chaplain of the

Christian Medical Center, the current Union head office. He also served as Associate Pastor of the First Armenian Evangelical Church, then as Pastor of the Armenian Evangelical Church of Ashrafieh.

Like my dad and grandfather, I also received my calling to the gospel ministry at an early age. I emigrated from Lebanon due to the civil war and was serving as a youth director at the Armenian Evangelical Church in Toronto when my calling became clear.

Upon completing my education in theology, I married Janine Raymond who also grew up in a pastor's home. We have been blessed to serve the Lord in Armenian churches and schools in Fresno, at Haigazian University in Beirut, then Pasadena and currently in the San Francisco Bay Area.


As I reflect on my calling, I become aware of all those who impacted my life for eternity. The primary influencers were my parents who lived out their faith in Jesus Christ both in the community as well as at home where we witnessed their integrity. Then observing the changed lives of my brother and sisters had a huge effect on me. Witnessing their transformation pulled me away from my rebellion and drew me to the Lord. My brother, John, was instrumental in my early years of faith when he served as the Director of Youth for Christ in Lebanon, while maintaining his involvement in the Armenian Evangelical Churches in Lebanon. And my sisters, Knar and Pauline, remained active in their churches and the wider community with an effective ministry of discipling others and sharing the love of Christ in action.

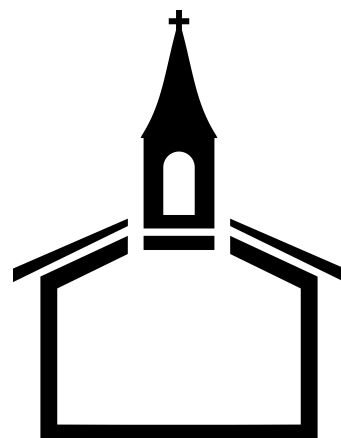
The Psalmist says, *"Such is the generation of those who seek Him, who seek your face, God of Jacob."* Psalm 24:6

God calls each of us whether pastors or lay people to be faithful in fulfilling our purposes on this earth, whatever they may

be. We are called to be faithful to walk with the Lord and to seek Him. We are called to proclaim the Gospel to our generation as well as the next. God does not demand results from our ministry, He simply expects us to be faithful in response to what He accomplished for us on the cross.

The Psalmist says, *"I will open my mouth... I will utter hidden things from of old - things we have heard and known, things our ancestors have told us. We will not hide them from their descendants; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, His power, and the wonders He has done... so the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born, and they in turn would tell their children. Then they would put their trust in God and would not forget His deeds but would keep His commands."* Psalm 78:2-4, 6-7

My son John is currently in seminary training. By God's grace, our children will have seen our faithfulness and respond to His calling to fulfill His unique purposes for each one. And if He chooses to call them to proclaim His praise in full-time ministry, my only response would be to stand in awe of God's amazing grace through the generations! 





175th Anniversary of the Armenian Evangelical Church:

Proclaiming the Message of Jesus Christ

By **Rev. Dr. Obed Boyadjian**, *Pastor of the Primera Iglesia Evangélica Armenia del Uruguay*

On July 1, 1846, the Armenian Evangelical Church was established in Constantinople, which constituted in its practices a return to the simplicity of original Christianity.

The Reform Movement, from which the Armenian Evangelical Church emerged, caused an awakening in the spiritual, as well as in the educational systems. Consequently, at the beginning of the 19th century, dozens of primary and secondary schools for boys and girls were established in the Armenian communities of the Ottoman Empire.

In 1955, in the city of Beirut, Lebanon, Haigazian College (now University) was founded, the only institute of higher education in the Armenian Diaspora.

In 1918, Armenian immigrants in the United States of America founded the Armenian Missionary Association of America, a missionary arm to help educational, reli-

gious and relief programs in various parts of the world.

Today in the 21st century, as members of the Armenian Diaspora and as Armenian Evangelicals, we feel the challenge of living up to the historical moment in which we live, as were those thirty-seven men and three women, who on July 1, 1846, established the Armenian Evangelical Church in Constantinople.

We live in a time where, despite great scientific discoveries and social changes, we are facing the same challenges on both ethical and moral levels as always. Observing the sadness in the world we see that many times people have not been able to have authentic inner peace or in relationships with others, not knowing that we have the same Father God and that we are all brothers and sisters.

In the face of sin and the complexities of human experiences, we, as churches have the challenge of being the light among the

shadows, making known in word and action the Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ who is "the Way, the Truth and the Life." John 14:6

Also, as members of the Armenian nation charged with sensitivity to the historical injustices suffered by our Nation, we have the challenge of desiring and being protagonists in the face of the pains of the world, of a Peace based on Justice and based on Law for the Armenian nation and for all nations of the world.

As descendants of the Armenian nation, who in 301AD was the first in the world to accept Christianity as its official religion, and as successors of the founders of the Armenian Evangelical Church, according to our vocations, let us continue working and proclaiming the message of Jesus Christ who makes all things new. Only then life is worth and will be worth living. 🇸🇻

(Translated from Spanish by Louisa Janbazian)



A TRIBUTE TO THE ARMENIAN EVANGELICAL CHURCH

By **Michael Voskian, D.M.D., AMAA Board member**

We have an amazing story in which to SHARE,
About an organization that we deeply CARE!
In 1846, forty Armenians had a mission in MIND,
Expressed in a statement of faith to which they SIGNED!
On a mission to spread the WORD,
With a message that needed to be HEARD!
There were many challenges over the YEARS,
Dealt with by these early PIONEERS!
The Armenian Evangelical Church started to GROW,
With each precious seed it did SOW!
Churches, schools, and seminaries were STARTED,
On a path that was truly UNCHARTED!

At 175 years, the AEC has reached a tremendous MILESTONE,
And how this wonderful church has really GROWN!
We are not only recognizing AEC for 175 years of SURVIVAL,
But rejoicing in serving a Lord who has no RIVAL!
The AEC has truly been a BLESSING,
For the spiritual needs of all whom it is ADDRESSING!
We congratulate the AEC on this Anniversary of 175 YEARS,
And pray that we continue to serve the Lord with our PEERS!
May the Lord continue to Bless the AEC with His GLORY,
So we may add to our amazing STORY!!

Waves of Grace

By Rev. Stephen Carlyle*

God has granted **Waves of Grace** throughout the history of the Armenian people. This is true from their call as a nation and decision at a pivotal point of faith from its birth as the first Christian nation in 301AD. Armenians have often been surrounded by opposition and tremendous persecution for 1,721 years due to their unstoppable belief in Jesus Christ, even unto death. **Through Waves of Grace, the Armenian people have survived and thrived.** We honor the Armenian Apostolic Church for holding the torch through much of this time. However, just as Martin Luther was used by God in the Reformation which brought light into Europe, so did the founding of the Armenian Evangelical Church bring knowledge and freedom of personal faith with everlasting life by Jesus Christ into the hearts of individuals.

Brave and faithful missionaries, theological students, and other faithful servants carried the Reformation into the communities of the Armenian people. Their great hope for the Armenian Apostolic Church – to embrace the truth of Jesus Christ – bore little fruit. This created the opportunity for the birth of the Armenian Evangelical Church.

This created a great and mighty movement of God, where freedom and inspiration of knowing Jesus Christ as one's personal Lord and Savior has helped carry in God's palms the light of Christ since 1846. Despite the hatred, persecution, indignity of the ravages of rape, the loss of possessions, finances, families, land, and throughout the mass genocides and wars, God never leaves His faithful ones alone. God has never left the Armenian people of faith even as they have been dispersed around the world.


The Evangelical presence provides a point of forgiveness into our hearts, perhaps, not ever forgetting, yet always forgiving and keeping the vision close at hand. "Where there is no vision, the people perish..." Proverbs 29:18

How can our Body of Believers preserve the historical significance of our churches while preparing them as a place for current and new believers and for new Armenians coming to the area who desire to have a church home? Let us revive any dry bones as Ezekiel said and be a presence of the beautiful Armenian Evangelical Church on fire for God, full of promise, hope and love for all who seek the Lord.

Preparing for the next generation in any congregation is a significant goal. Preparing for the next generations of Armenians to fill the church is not an impossible goal. It is one which provides the taste of the traditions and comfort which our type of services and liturgies provide. Perhaps we are just one ethnic or national tragedy away from our churches again needing to be a place for new refugees to come or as in the case of Elya and her family who are coming this fall and desire to go to school in America. Let our hearts and doors be open!

We never know the full impact of our efforts to share Christ. My wife Carol and I preached to about 500 people in the only church in the Pabbo refugee camp of 67,000 people in northern Uganda during the height of the war with the Lord's Resistance Army. The LRA's war crimes mimic the Armenian Genocide. This conflict has continued for over three decades. Answering God's call to share the Gospel, we were missionaries through our ministry of Grace in God's Hands. We took great risk to share the Gospel and bring aid to the people. We wondered if these children would survive the risk of cholera, typhoid, starvation, abduction as child soldiers or war brides or be mass murdered. As we saw the men hammering their farm tools into spears, we prayed for the day according to Isaiah 2:4 "...they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore."

Our hearts were deeply seared with compassion as the children's frail bodies and big eyes filling with tears lined up to receive prayers and a Beanie Baby. Their big smiles and hugs forever touched our hearts. Leaving them in the hands of God, we wondered if our presence would make a difference in their lives. Fourteen years later, I attended the graduation of Christ Bible School in Uganda which we co-founded with indigenous leaders. It was created to train pastors from the refugee camps in northern Uganda and other remote areas. One of our female students told me that she was one of those children we prayed for at the camp. My point is, your efforts make a difference in the lives of others, allowing them to also make a difference in the lives of many others.

Let the Waves of Grace flow as we pray and act. Let us lay down at the foot of the cross all concerns, whether relationships, financial, heritage preservation or church growth. Let us be the church which catches the Tsunami Wave of Revival about to come to America and take the ride on the wave of salvation across the world. 



* **Rev. Stephen Carlyle** is the Pastor of the Armenian Church of the Martyrs, Worcester, MA.



Remembering Our Past, Building Our Future

ARMENIAN CHURCH OF THE MARTYRS, Worcester, MA

The first established Armenian Evangelical Church in North America and the birthplace of AMAA

The Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth be silent before him. Habakkuk 2:20

The Armenian Church of the Martyrs is the first Armenian Evangelical Church in North America. It traces its roots to prayer meetings that began in 1881, when there were 15-20 Armenian immigrants residing in Worcester, MA. Hovhannes Yazijian held worship services in his home, allowing all to come and join in fellowship. Before coming to America, Mr. Yazijian and his wife, Sarah, both studied at missionary colleges and served as missionaries in Turkey. The worship services they led at their home

were the genesis of what is now known as the Armenian Church of the Martyrs.

As more Armenians settled in the United States, there was a great need for an Armenian Evangelical community. By 1890, as Armenian Evangelicals settled in Worcester, a larger meeting place was necessary. The Mission Chapel, a local American church, kindly provided a new venue in which Armenian believers could congregate. Visiting preachers, including Rev. H. G. Paragian, Rev. H. K. Santikian, and Mr. M. Eufejian, led these worship services. Rev. Hovhannes Garabedian was the first official and paid minister of the church and served from 1887-1889, followed by Rev. Asadour Antreasian, Rev. Albert Hitchcock, Rev. Haroutune Sargavakian and Rev. Karekin Chitijian. In 1892, Rev. Hitchcock, who was an Armenian-speaking missionary, organized the church and affiliated it with the Congregational denomination. It was incorporated on January 1, 1892, as the Armenian Congregational Church.

In 1894, Rev. Kyos Kemalian came from the Middle East and began his service to the church. Under his leadership, the congregation set a goal to erect its own church building.

In 1896, Rev. Khachadoor Benneyan (pictured in the center photo above) started his ministry at the Worcester Church. Under his leadership, the church officially decided to erect its own building; the name of this new church structure would be the Church of the Martyrs, in honor of friends and loved ones who had died in the Turkish Massacres



Rev. Stephen Carlyle, Pastor of Worcester Church.

of 1895. Land was acquired on Pink Street (later renamed Ormond Street) for the church building and a groundbreaking ceremony took place on Thursday, May 30, 1901. The cornerstone laying ceremony took place on Sunday, July 14, 1901, and the first service in this new building was held on Sunday, December 1, 1901. This same building continues to serve the people of Worcester and is the oldest Armenian church in continuous use in North America.

During Rev. Benneyan's ministry, the church flourished as he brought the community together as a unified body of believers. Rev. Benneyan stepped down due to an illness in 1904.

Rev. Garabed Manavian followed Rev. Benneyan, serving from September 1, 1904,



Worcester Church restored.



Worcester Church Praise and Worship Team.



Some members of Worcester Church after Sunday Worship Service.

to August 16, 1918, and was instrumental in the formation of the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America (AEUNA). The AEUNA, as well as the Armenian Missionary Association of America, trace their roots to the Armenian Church of the Martyrs. Following Rev. Manavian to the pulpit was Rev. Kapriel Bedrossian, who served for 17 years until 1936, when he took a pastoral position at Gethsemane Armenian Congregational Church in Los Angeles.

After Rev. Bedrossian's ministry at the Armenian Church of the Martyrs, Rev. Aram T. Bagdikian served as its pastor from May 1937 until his death in August 1957. To this day, his 20 years of faithful ministry stand as the longest ministry of any one pastor at the Armenian Church of the Martyrs. Among those who followed were Rev. Puzant Levonian, Rev. Bernard Guekguezian, Rev. Herald A. G. Hassessian, Rev. Manasseh Shnorhokian, Rev. Ardashes Kerbajian, Rev. Dr. Gary Shahinian, Rev. Ara Jizmejian, Francis Merzigian and Rev. David Melvin. Under Rev. Melvin's care, the church building renovation project was completed with the financial support of the AMAA and the youth of the Church who also helped raise funds for the project.

Rev. Stephen Carlyle was called to serve as pastor beginning in 2018. He continues to faithfully provide enthusiastic expository preaching and prepares special worship services. He and his wife Carol joyfully serve together in many ways, including visitations.

The 100th Anniversary Celebration of the Founding of the Armenian Missionary Association of America in Worcester Church included the awarding of a plaque at AMAA's Centennial Banquet. The historical closing service was held in Worcester Church which was shared with leaders from around the world who came for the AMAA Annual Meeting held in Boston.

Like most all churches, COVID impacted the Worcester Church too. However, they continued holding weekly worship services online until they could gather in person again. In addition to the weekly worship services, the Church holds mid-week Bible studies in the fall and during Lent, sponsors dinners around various church and national holidays, coffee hours after church services, and offers a number of youth activities such as leading a praise song on Sundays and the newly created *Jammin for Jesus* Praise and Worship Services.

The Moderator of the Church is Stephen Papazian, who co-leads the worship services.

The interior of the church contains five stained glass windows. The three panes above the altar state in Armenian script:

- In memory of the Armenian Bible translators
- In memory of all Armenian martyrs
- In memory of all the Apostles who were among the Armenians, and in memory of Armenian clergy

The Armenian script along the altar arch quotes from Habakkuk 2:20, which says: ***The Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth be silent before him.***

The Armenian Church of The Martyrs is not measured by its numbers or wealth. It is measured by the heart for ministry to people, its history, current and future legacy, which will remain a vital part of the Armenian community and its historic importance, both locally and around the world. We must be willing to open our hearts and homes to others. 🌍



AMAA members at Worcester Church for a special 100th Anniversary Worship Service.



Stephen Philibosian Foundation

History at a Glance

By Joyce Philibosian Stein, Stephen Philibosian Foundation Trustee

The inner motivation in the depths of a person leads to success. Stephen Philibosian's success was a consequence of the motivation that parents and circumstances implanted in his heart. Born in hilly and remote Hadjin, where opportunities for a financial success were limited, Stephen had a burning desire to go to the United States. "Why my son," asked his mother pleadingly one day, "are you so anxious to go to America?" His honest answer did not surprise her: "I want to go to America to make a lot of money, return to Hadjin and start an industry so I might pay big wages to the workers."

This was the height of his ambition which went as far back as he could remember and of which his mother approved with these

words: "My son, God bless you. Go with that dream in your heart. God will be with you, and you will fulfill your dream." This commenced his dream to become wealthy, with ambition to be helpful to his beloved race which had suffered so much.

Stephen was born to dedicated Christian parents in a town 100 miles north of Adana, and, at 10 years of age, moved to the biblical town of Tarsus. His dream became reality when he arrived in the United States at the age of 17, on May 1, 1909, just before the Adana Massacres. His dream was realized: albeit his ambition to return to his motherland was dashed with news of massacres. His parents were saved, thanks to the protection given by missionaries at Saint Paul's College in Tarsus. So, while working and living with an uncle in Syracuse, NY, he learned

the intricacies of the oriental rug business as an apprentice. He also resolved to bring his family to America. But this was not easy since money was needed as he was earning only \$10 a week. It was also difficult, because after the long day of work, there was night school to attend; enabling him to communicate in his new language.

Stephen was given the added responsibility of waiting on customers and selling his uncle's rugs. He learned so quickly, his uncle dispatched him soon to a nearby town to conduct a sale of rugs all by himself! This was about the time he was able to send money to bring his family to America: within six months he greeted them at Ellis Island. (Stephen Philibosian's name is inscribed on the immigrants' Ellis Island Wall). Speaking of his parent's influence, "Whatever success I have, I owe my parents. They were my inspiration; my love for them stirred my imagination and enabled me to learn well to make them comfortable." With the responsibility of caring for his parents and other members of the family upon him, he decided he must seek a better position.

In spite of his uncle's disappointment, he took the position of salesman in Wade's Department Store in Auburn, NY. He became the rug buyer and operator of the Oriental rug concession in his first solo business venture. It was such a success that one day Mr. Wade confided, Stephen was making more money than the store's president! Success came his way!

Then off to Atlanta, GA, Stephen built a beautiful store of his own on Peachtree Street. The store was considered one of the most magnificent in all the country: Georgia's Governor personally wished Stephen success at the occasion of the grand opening.



Stephen Philibosian visits a needy family in Beirut, Lebanon.

Success was enjoyed, but only for a short time because of the Great Depression. However, this turn of events proved to be only a temporary hurdle. In time, Stephen owned and operated over 10 oriental carpet concessions throughout America. His ingenuity in this field earned him the title, "Dean of Oriental Rug Retailing."

In 1932, Stephen made his initial trip abroad since emigration. While visiting the Middle East, he was profoundly impressed by the severe poverty. With the consent of the government of Lebanon, his first project was to help his unfortunate countrymen by constructing a Beirut community known today as "Nor Hadjin." Aided by his Uncle Harry, Stephen completed a community center based in Philibosian Hall. He then embarked on providing food and shelter for the impoverished widows, the blind, and orphaned children. Throughout the years, he personally and through his foundation fostered many thousands of children.

Another of his charitable endeavors was serving on the Board of the Sanitarium at Azounieh, Lebanon which was known for its high caliber of medicine, specializing in the treatment of tuberculosis. In Beirut, 1963, a reception was given in his honor by people who had served with him on the Board of Azounieh Sanitarium. Founders Reverend Yenovk Hadidian and Henry Gertmenian said, "Over 40 years ago when we established the hospital, we solicited funds from our friends in the United States. Mr. Philibosian was the first to respond with a substantial donation." Thus, it was with Stephen, ever watchful for opportunities to serve his people on a grand scale, especially those who had not been fortunate enough to come to this blessed country of plenty.

The opportunity for more intense service came in 1948 when, during a Sunday service in the former Masis church of Los Angeles, Reverend Puzant Kalfayan described the deplorable condition of schools in the Middle East. Deeply moved and seizing the moment, Stephen invited Reverend Kalfayan to his home where the Child Education Sponsor Program was born. Together they organized a banquet, where speeches and tears, coupled with excitement, touched the hearts of so many, that in one evening, 300 students were sponsored for six years of elementary school.

This program has greatly expanded and continues today, implemented by the Armenian Missionary Association of America. Soon after the establishment of the Child

Education Sponsor Program, Stephen and his family moved to Philadelphia where he joined the Armenian Missionary Association of America's Board of Directors. He worked steadfastly to make the organization a star in the American-Armenian community. Stephen became Treasurer of his beloved organization and began to dream about putting the Association on a strong financial footing. Becoming deeply involved in the work of the AMAA, he established a sustaining endowment fund with an initial contribution of \$100,000. With his business acumen, he invested this amount, with additional contributions; and his AMAA endowment fund today is the resource for humanitarian efforts: education, and the physical and spiritual welfare of Armenian's worldwide. It is noteworthy, that during his tenure as Treasurer, he effectively launched AMAA's investment portfolio, currently valued at about \$140 million.

The year 1967, saw the AMAA, jointly with Stephen as a financial catalyst, build or restore 12 impoverished schools in Lebanon. Thousands of youngsters basked in the fresh new and shiny schools! In addition, the team embarked on a completed and desperately needed slum clearance program in Beirut. In 1965, Stephen was decorated by the Lebanese President with the Order of the Cedar, the Republic of Lebanon's highest order.



Rev. Hovhannes Aharonian, President of the Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East, honors Stephen Philibosian.



Rev. Dr. Giragos Chopourian, AMAA Executive Director, honors Ruth Philibosian.

Without doubt, Haigazian University became Stephen's passionate vision, and it deserves special mention. While it was conceived in Phoenix, Arizona, in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Mehagian, it was born in Radnor, Pennsylvania on a snowy March evening in 1955 at Stephen Philibosian's hilltop home. With the initial gift of \$25,000 from the Mehagians, Stephen worked diligently to implement the challenging details: locate a building in Beirut to house the college, find the ideal president and secure critical

operating funds. He was responsible for the purchase of the initial structure from the American Congregational Board of Foreign Missions, at a remarkably low price of \$25,000.

The search for an exemplary leader resulted in the fortuitous choice of Dr. John Markarian, a professor from Lafayette College in Easton, Pennsylvania, who served with distinction for over 25 years. Operational funds were assured by a generous Board of Trustees. It is interesting to note AMAA's Board of Directors requested that Stephen select his own Board of Trustees. With generous and faithful cooperation from the Trustees, Haigazian was given enormous funds for an additional building on campus.

Steven Mugar, a philanthropist from Boston, donated the Mugar Building with additional support from Alex Manoogian. This magnificent structure is considered a rare, historic landmark in Lebanon. Having been damaged during the Civil War, the landmark has been restored to its prior glorious state and is one of the most beautiful buildings in all of Lebanon. It became the home of former President, Rev. Dr. John Khanjian and is currently home to Rev. Dr. Paul Haidostian and his family.

The University, which celebrates its 65th anniversary this year, has enjoyed the largesse of the Stephen Philibosian Foundation's annual scholarships and even more. This Christian institution was founded with the express purpose of training Armenian youths for work in all professional fields. Today, the University continues to provide

a full complement of superior academics for a diverse student body. Of the thousands of Haigazian graduates, many or singularly have accomplished impressive success in their specific fields. This indeed has been the fulfillment of the founder's dream and vision.

In spite of the rapid growth and immense proportions of all the projects, the Philibosian Foundation has never displayed the least resentment, inconvenience, or lack of generosity, while it meant assisting his people, regardless of political or religious affiliation. The thought his mother planted in his mind many years ago was always his guide: "Be helpful to your people as that is the way God wants you to be." This has been and always was the hallmark of the life of Stephen Philibosian and his foundation continues that magnificent tradition today. 🇺🇸



Mr. & Mrs. Joe and Joyce Philibosian Stein.



Stephen Philibosian at his home in Radnor, PA.



Philibosian family - L to R: Mother Martha, Charles, Ruth, Siroon, Stephen & Father Yeprem.



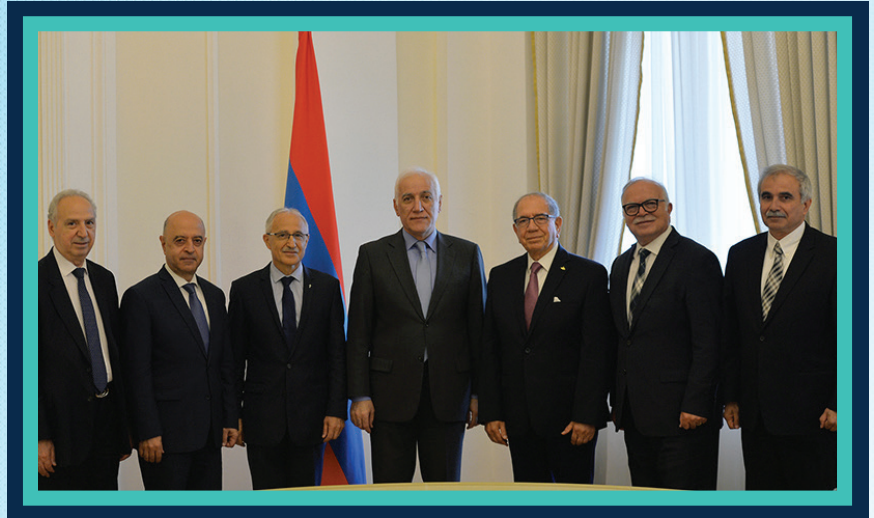
Stephen Philibosian with his daughters Louise Danelian and Joyce Stein.



RA President Khachaturyan Welcomes a Delegation of the Armenian Evangelical Church

On Thursday June 30, RA President Vahagn Khachaturyan received a delegation of the Armenian Evangelical Church. The President welcomed the guests and praised the multi-layered activities of AMAA in the charitable and humanitarian spheres. The delegates thanked President Khachaturyan for the hospitality and presented the current and upcoming programs planned by the Association. Both sides agreed to combine efforts to overcome various humanitarian and charitable issues.

***L to R:** Rev. René Léonian (Eurasia), Rev. Dr. Paul Haidostian (Near East), Rev. Joël Mikaélian (France), President Vahagn Khachaturyan, Zaven Khanjian (AMAA), Rev. Mgrdich Melkonian (Armenia) and Rev. Hendrik Shanazarian (Americas).*



RA Prime Minister Pashinyan Receives AMAA Delegation

On Tuesday July 12, RA Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan received representatives of the AMAA led by its Executive Director/CEO Zaven Khanjian along with his wife Sona, AMAA Armenia Representative Harout Nercessian, AMAA Armenia Deputy Representative Aren Deyirmenjian and Associate Pastor of Evangelical Church of Armenia on Baghramyan Ave. Rev. Hovhannes Hovsepyan.

The Prime Minister welcomed the guests and congratulated them on the occasion of the 175th Anniversary of the Armenian Evangelical Church.

Zaven Khanjian thanked the Prime Minister for the meeting and presented the programs implemented by the AMAA.

During the meeting they exchanged ideas on Armenia-Diaspora relations, challenges facing the Homeland and ways to overcome them.





AMAA Executive Director/CEO Visits Mission Field in Istanbul

Following the Armenian Evangelical Church's 175th Anniversary commemorative events in Armenia, Armenian Missionary Association of America Executive Director/CEO Zaven Khanjian, along with his wife Sona, traveled to Istanbul on Saturday, July 16, 2022, for a short mission field visit where they were welcomed by Rev. Kirkor Ağabaloğlu, Pastor of the Armenian Evangelical Church in Gedikpaşa.

On Sunday, July 17, Mr. Khanjian participated in the Worship Service of the Armenian Evangelical Church in Gedikpaşa, and shared a message in Armenian while Rev. Ağabaloğlu, translated to Turkish. The message was based on Matthew 5:14-16, "You are the light of the world."

On Monday, July 18, Mr. Khanjian with his wife Sona, and accompanied by Rev. Ağabaloğlu, visited the Patriarchate of

Istanbul where they were received by His Eminence Archbishop Sahag II Mashalian, Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople.

The guests congratulated His Eminence on his election as the Patriarch of Constantinople. Mr. Khanjian spoke about the celebratory events of the 175th Anniversary of the Armenian Evangelical Church held in Yerevan and remembered with gratitude the presence of Archbishop Nathan Hovhannisian, who delivered the congratulatory message of His Holiness Karekin II Catholicos of All Armenians. Mr. Khanjian also thanked the Patriarch for his message on the same occasion.

His Eminence once again congratulated the Armenian Evangelical Church on its 175th Anniversary and emphasized the importance of preaching the Holy Bible in our times, as people sometimes have a negative attitude toward the Bible. He also emphasized the

need to continue living our Christian faith by following the example of our grandfathers who experienced miracles with faith.

Mr. Khanjian referred to the reconstruction project of Camp Armen in Tuzla and expressed the desire of His Eminence's moral support and blessing. His Eminence emphasized that the rightful owner of the institution is the Armenian Evangelical Community and, since it will be used by members of the Armenian community without religious discrimination, the work done would be of interest to the Patriarchal See and the Armenian Catholic Archdiocese. He also stated that he gave instructions for fundraising, and engagement in future plans.

Mr. Khanjian expressed his satisfaction that an inter-community understanding was formed for the realization of such a goal. He also emphasized that there were healthy inter-church relations in Istanbul, the result

of which was the book about the Basic Principles of Christianity published in Turkish, Armenian, and English languages, the like of which has never been seen before. His Eminence gave copies of these books to the guests, as well as copies of his authored book "Yergu Ukhtavor" (Two Pilgrims). The guests expressed their gratitude for the hospitality and dialogue and bid farewell to His Eminence.

On the same day, Mr. Khanjian and his wife, Sona, accompanied by Rev. Kirkor Ağabaloğlu, visited



L to R: Fr. Drtad Uzunian, Rev. Kirkor Ağabaloğlu, Archbishop Sahag II Mashalian, Mr. & Mrs. Zaven and Sona Khanjian and Father Krikor Damadian.



L to R: Rev. Kirkor Ağabaloğlu, Archbishop Sahag II Mashalian, Mr. & Mrs. Zaven and Sona Khanjian.

Archbishop Boghos Lévon Zékiyan of the Armenian Catholic Archdiocese of Istanbul at Sourp Hovannes (St. John) Voskeperan mother church in Beyoğlu, Istanbul. Joining the guests was Father Vartan Kazanjian.

Matters relating to the Armenian community in Istanbul and the region were topics of discussion. Archbishop Zékiyan expressed support for the reconstruction of Camp Armen in Tuzla and affirmed the Church's inclination to engage in the project. The guests thanked the Archbishop for welcoming them with a warm reception.

On July 18, Mr. and Mrs. Khanjian also visited the Hrant Dink School located at the Armenian Evangelical Church of Gedikpaşa in Istanbul. They interacted with the students in grades K-9 who presented a special performance of recitations and songs. It was a moving experience to see this island, a ghetto of national identity. These children and their school are equivalent to the "Youth Home of Istanbul" – children who are 'cast out' of the system, but warmly embraced by our Church in Gedikpaşa supported by the AMAA, where they come to know, learn, and realize their national identity, origin, and Christian faith.

On July 19, his last day in Istanbul, Mr. Khanjian along with his wife, Rev. Ağabaloğlu, Hrant Dink School children, teachers, and staff, as well as members of the Camp Armen Building Committee, representatives of the three Armenian denominations, and representatives of the Gedikpaşa Municipal Council visited Camp Armen. A bus was provided by the Municipal Council who invited the guests to share a meal with them following the visit. At the Camp, they reminisced about Camp Armen and the two Hrants – Guzelian and Dink – and pledged to realize the dream of rebuilding the Camp for the youth and young adults of the community without discrimination. Turkish newspaper and TV reporters met the guests at the Camp and interviewed them.

"It was a very rewarding experience to embrace the legacy of Camp Armen, its heroes and heroines and the promise of a new community camp which will perpetuate that legacy and bring forth the promise of a new faithful generation of youth in Istanbul. AMAA, holding hands with the Armenian Apostolic and Catholic Churches, vows to support the rebuilding of the new camp for the benefit of community youth and young adults," said Mr. Khanjian.

May God bless the sweet memory of the past and the plans to rebuild the new Camp Armen in Istanbul. ■

At Hrant Dink School



At Camp Armen





Sharing God's Love Through Service to Those Less Fortunate

AMAA's 13th Annual Medical Mission Trip to Armenia

By Dr. Al and Sue Phillips*

On June 2, 2022, 22 people left for a 10-day Medical Mission trip to Armenia. For 13 years, Sue and I have organized and led medical teams to Armenia. This year's Mission, led by myself and my daughter Allison, returned to the Lori Valley to serve in the rural towns of Vanadzor and Stepanavan. Patients were also bused in from the local villages. The patients were triaged, then examined by our doctors and provided medication for up to one year, all the while sharing God's love through service to those less fortunate.

The Mission has dramatically evolved over the last 13 years. Because of the AMAA's investment in the medical mission's outreach, there are now Armenian doctors, an Armenian pharmacist and dentist who collaborate with us. They work side by side with us in the clinic and have become an essential part of the Mission's vision. After our departure, they provide follow-up on the patients. It is a wonderful synergy of professionals working for one purpose; to ease the suffering of our Armenian brothers and sisters and to share God's love for them.

This year, our medical staff saw approximately 525 patients and our dentists treated 175 patients. Each patient first passed through the clinic to have his/her vital signs collected and urine testing completed. If necessary, an EKG was performed. From there, nurses and medical students interviewed the patients to collect a preliminary history. They received health education from a nursing educator on diabetes, smoking cessation, and nutrition. If necessary, blood work was obtained. From the triage area, they were seen by the team of physicians, where they were examined and prayed for. Prescriptions were given for a variety of conditions, but primarily for hypertension, diabetes, and heart disease.

The patients were counseled on their medications by the pharmacist and, thanks to the AMAA, given enough medications for one full year. Throughout the clinic, patients were invited to church services where team members and the local church pastoral staff shared the Good News of Jesus Christ. In addition to the medical exams, occupational therapist Allison Phillips collected data on the development of 113 infants and children and provided families with age-appropriate activities and resources to promote development. Matt Momjian and Laura Lester had solicited donations and brought hundreds of first aid kits to Armenia that will be given to families.

With the help of our Armenian counterparts, including additional support people, the Mission ran exceptionally well this year. The Mission is a team event, where all participants, both professionals and non-professionals, become essential parts of a well-tuned machine. I am thankful for both our American and Armenian support participants, whose motivation is to serve God in a very tangible fashion. We are also extremely thankful to our faithful team of Armenian translators.

The Mission has lasting impact on those who participate as evidenced by the essay shared with this article, written by Corrie Phillips, our niece. Sue and I hope



Medical Mission Team members visit the Madenataran in Yerevan.

that the impact of the Mission experience will help guarantee a bright future for the AMAA and encourage another generation of support and interest in the AMAA. Sue and I want to publically thank the leadership of the AMAA, under the direction of Zaven Khanjian and Nazareth Darakjian, M.D., for their backing on so many fronts.

We have committed to lead our 14th mission next year. If you have a desire to serve our brothers and sisters in Armenia or want more information, please go to the amaa.org website and look for the Armenia Medical Mission link under the projects tab. Medical and non-medical, Armenian and non-Armenian speaking volunteers are welcome to apply. Please consider joining us and help make a difference in the name of Jesus Christ.

** Dr. Al and Sue Phillips are the leaders of AMAA's Armenia Medical Mission.*



Serving Hands

By Corrie Phillips*

Have you ever thought about the importance of hands? Have you taken notice of the type of hands that a person has? Does that reveal something about that person?

During my five days of clinic, split between Vanadzor and Stepanavan, the most noteworthy and striking thing that stood out to me was the condition of the hands of those whom I was serving. As I measured vitals for over 300 patients, I was able to not only see their hands, but to feel and examine them – up close and personally.

It was immediately clear to me that these hands were not the hands I have been used to touching and seeing. No – these hands were completely different. These hands were big. These hands were strong. This skin was tough and calloused. These knuckles were fleshy and full. These palms were dry and cracked. Yet, each of these 600+ hands, minus some fingers I might add, reached out to God.

In Psalm 90:17 Moses writes, “Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us; and establish the work of our hands upon us; yes, establish the work of our hands!”

The condition of the hands of the Armenians I encountered revealed insights about my people. Upon identifying so many worn out hands, I could not stop asking myself this question: what must hands do to reach such a state?

Hands work in the field, in the office, in the home. Hands prepare food for loved ones. Hands take care of children and elders. Hands play instruments. Hands create works of art. Hands pray. Hands lift up to worship the Lord our God. These hands serve Jesus Christ.

Although not perfectly manicured and well moisturized, the hands of my Armenian brothers and sisters in Christ were beautiful and perfectly sculpted by our Creator in Heaven.

Now, after this experience, I have come to realize the importance in asking God, through devout prayer, for blessing on any work He assigns. We cannot accomplish anything with everlasting significance until we pray.

As revealed through God’s word in concert with my experience with the hands in Armenia, God is passionate, God gives joy, and God pours out blessings on those who serve Him. It then becomes clear that God bestows these gifts to those who honor Him, even if those gifts do not materialize in the form of a prosperous and “easy” life.

As we put our faith in Jesus and use our hands according to His purpose and to worship Him, we find hope and steadfast love.

“For the Lord is good; His steadfast love endures forever; and His faithfulness to all generations.” Psalm 100:5

Asdvadz orhné tzéz (God bless you).



** Corrie Phillips is a team member of AMAA's Armenia Medical Mission*

Evening of Gratitudes in Yerevan, Armenia

On Sunday, July 10, an Evening of Worship service was held at the Evangelical Church of Armenia on Baghramyan Ave. in Yerevan, in honor of Rev. Mgrdich Melkonian's ten years service in Armenia. AMAA Executive Director/CEO Zaven Khanjian expressed his gratitude to Rev. Melkonian and his wife Houri for their sacrificial service in the Motherland.



Zaven Khanjian expresses his gratitude to Harout Nercessian.

On Monday, July 11, an Evening of Gratitude was held at the Evangelical Church of Armenia on Baghramyan Ave. in appreciation of AMAA Armenia Representative Harout Nercessian's 26 years of service in Armenia and Artsakh. Following the testimonies of AMAA Armenia staff, the AMAA Executive Director/CEO expressed his words of gratitude and appreciation for Mr. Nercessian's sacrificial service in the Motherland.



Zaven Khanjian expresses his gratitude to Rev. Mgrdich Melkonian.

Aren Deyirmenjian Appointed New AMAA Representative in Armenia

Zaven Khanjian, AMAA Executive Director/CEO, announced the appointment of Aren Deyirmenjian as the new AMAA Representative in Armenia effective September 1, 2022.

Aren moved from his hometown of Beirut to join Yerevan's management team at Baghramyan Ave. as AMAA's Deputy Representative in Armenia three years ago. Aren's personal journey in faith took him through what he calls an "awakening process" which made him realize that he had to leave the comfort of his home and venture into the unknown to find true meaning and purpose.

Aren had been part of his family's manufacturing business in Lebanon, after graduating from the American University of Beirut in 2013 with a bachelor's degree in Landscape Architecture. He was also deeply involved with the Armenian Evangelical Church of Ashrafieh as Youth Group General Director and a Christian Endeavor Committee Member. In 2016, he pursued a MBA degree in Montreux, Switzerland, graduating in 2018. When the position with the AMAA presented itself a year later, he thought it was a good time to step out of his role in the family business and bring his management experience and spiritual discourse into different uses in humanitarian missions and kingdom causes.

As AMAA's Deputy Representative in Armenia, part of Aren's daily responsibilities included overlooking construction projects, liaison with the finance team, budget preparation, and writing grant proposals. He also regularly visited various AMAA offices in Armenia and Artsakh to learn more about the needs of the communities in each region. He worked closely with Harout Nercessian, AMAA Armenia Representative, to outline strategies, as well as evaluate current and past programs with concerned parties.

Aren is a musician, with degrees in classical and jazz piano studies, and plays in Nor Yerk's worship band. He uses his free time playing the piano, enjoying Armenia's rich musical scene, traveling, exercising, reading, and food-tasting.

His motivation remains to be an obedient servant; one who tries to accomplish what the Lord has put before him.

"I am delighted with the appointment of Aren Deyirmenjian as AMAA's Representative in Armenia. Aren has demonstrated devotion and worked diligently for the advancement of AMAA's mission in Armenia," said AMAA Executive Director/CEO Zaven Khanjian. "We know that his management experience and spiritual maturity will help advance the work of the AMAA in the Homeland and Artsakh."



AMAA in Berdzor, Artsakh

'For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat... I needed clothes and you clothed me...' Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink?...' The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'

Matthew 25:35-40

Amazingly we are a cheerful people. No one's barbarism or violence can break the mighty soul of the Armenian nation striving for eternal light. This is exactly the spirit of the people of Berdzor in Artsakh, filled with light and love. Love for their native land and for the Armenian people. After the war, many Berdzor residents returned to their home, although the future was uncertain and living conditions were difficult. They say, - We know how to live badly, we know how to live well, to be short, without water and electricity, but we have not complained, we have always been happy to be here in our home. We are now sad, because they are forcing us out of our Berdzor...

With unspeakable great pain and sorrow, everyone tries to believe that one day a miracle will happen and they will return. No one can describe the feelings experienced by the residents of Berdzor... pain and longing even before leaving the place...

From August 6-8, 2022 AMAA's Artsakh team organized a three-day camp for the children in Berdzor. The goal was one: to be with them, to live with them and to leave bright memories in the children... These children are the future of Artsakh, they are our hope for tomorrow... When the team members talked with the children about their impressions of these three days, they heard different answers, but the answer from one of them turned the spirits upside down: - **We had bread to eat...**



Tell Me a Family Story

By **Daron Antranig Nouri**, AMAA 2022 James G. Jameson Essay Contest Winner, High School Level

“Tell me a story about the adventures of Uncle Arshavir, or the haunting story of my Great-Uncle Joe.” “Uncle Johnny, tell me a story again.” “Medzma, tell me a story about your parents.”

These are all common requests in my family. Stories of my family’s legacy inspire me. They are always interesting, different, and unique and have taught me compassion, empathy, and perseverance. These stories and my experiences as an active member of the Armenian Church and community have helped me to understand and appreciate my Armenian heritage and have molded me into who I am.

Two men especially have influenced our shared family stories. One of them somehow makes it into every story told around the dinner table. His name was Arshavir—Uncle Arshavir to me. After the Genocide, he joined a group of Armenians that were tasked with the responsibility of tracking down the Turkish officials responsible. This has led to countless stories at the dinner table of the dangerous, heroic, adventurous deeds and exploits experienced by Uncle Arshavir.

The other major figure in our family—another uncle on my grandfather’s side—was Uncle Joe, whose story was as legendary as Uncle Arshavir’s stories of reckoning. But Uncle Joe’s had to do with surviving. To keep Joe from falling into the hands of Turk authorities during the Genocide and certain death on a death march, Joe’s mother dressed him as a girl. On their travels to escape, for example, among the many experiences the mother and son had was an encounter with a merchant who wanted Joe’s mother to marry him off to the merchant’s son! Leave it to an Armenian mother to wile her way out of that predicament. In addition to everything else, his wise Armenian mother had to tell the merchant that Uncle Joe was a male, without endangering her son, and, at the same time, keep the disguise a secret. She succeeded! And at the dinner table we had to come up with new ways and go over old ones that an Armenian mother safely and securely used to save the life of her young son and herself and reach freedom.

But just as everyone else did, Uncle Joe witnessed violence, bloodshed, and inhumanity, including the murders of family members. Even so, Uncle Joe was described by family members as



being the most quiet, humble, and gentle man ever to live. God protected him to become the man he was.

These two stories resonate with me in helping to understand who I am in terms of the past and the future. I will never forget what Uncle Arshavir and Uncle Joe must have lived through and how they represent so many other Armenian men and women who coped with and survived unspeakable horrors to serve as role models for their families, for all other Armenians and for all human beings who face and overcome inhumanity.

Such stories of survival have taught me numerous lessons, including how to use perseverance to convert obstacles into steppingstones to meet God’s plans for us. As Winston Churchill

said, “Never, never, never give up.” I have learned that persevering over small challenges prepares and strengthens us, with God’s help and prayer, to persevere over larger ones.

Such stories have taught me the importance of family. I agree one hundred percent with the saying, “Friends may come and go, but family is always there.” Listening to these stories has shown me that a loving, devoted, church-going Christian family is truly one of the greatest blessings. I have also learned how to empathize with people from all over the world that have experienced similar torment. Having relatives who went through such atrocities leads to understanding and relating to the emotions of Holocaust survivors and of people in persecuted churches today.

Such stories have taught me never to forget the fact that my relatives were, at one point in their lives, immigrants to America and that my grandparents hardly spoke English and struggled for years to get by. This has taught me to care for the needy. As a result, I have realized how blessed I am to be an American. I have encountered people around me talking negatively about living in America. But coming from a family that were once immigrants, I am very thankful and grateful I am an American. To be an American is something I will never take for granted.

I have learned that forgiveness is a key part of living right. Forgiveness is being right with God, which results in peace and freedom, through the realization that God has the final word. Forgiveness is not the same as forgetting. Although I may forgive, I will never forget what my relatives went through. This is something that I often find very difficult to do, as the Turkish people did horrible things to my relatives but have never asked for forgiveness, even as many other countries continue to despise and attack Armenians today. However, the Bible calls us to, “Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.”

Matthew 5:44 This is a verse that I take to heart, especially when I think of what happened to my ancestors. As a Christian, I must never let hatred and revenge prevent me from moving forward in my life.

In addition to all the above lessons, family stories have encouraged me to foster goals. I always refer to what my ancestors had to go through, and it continues to drive me forward, no matter how difficult the challenge. My Armenian heritage has drawn me closer to God and Jesus Christ and The Holy Spirit. Being an Eagle Scout, I have been very fortunate to work with Fr. Hovnan Demerjian and accomplish what is known as the Ararat Award—completing assignments relative to serving God and Jesus Christ and The Holy Spirit, and the Church, my heritage, and Armenian culture. I have had the privilege to meet people from Armenia and other Armenians from all over the world who share our common heritage. I look forward to going to the St. Nersess Armenian Summer Camp and meet other Armenians of my age. This is personally important to me because, despite attending an extremely large school, I have never met another Armenian in my classes. I look forward to bonding with other people who share a common heritage.

These stories and opportunities continue to shape where I come from, who I am, and what I hope and pray to become. My motivation, way of life, and goals originate from people before me. It is more than genetic. It is spiritual. I love the old saying, “You are a combination of all your ancestors that have come before you.” I would not be the same person without my Armenian heritage and am so grateful to God and Jesus Christ and The Holy Spirit for my family and my Church and for all the other blessings and opportunities given to us.

YES HYE EM (I am Armenian). 🇺🇸



AMAA Awards Scholarships to College and University Students

The Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) awarded \$232,500.00 in direct scholarship grants for the academic year 2022-2023 to 84 worthy students attending colleges and universities in the United States and Canada announced John Cherkezian, Chair of the AMAA’s Scholarship Committee.

An additional \$32,000 was also assigned for qualified university students in Armenia.

For over 50 years, the AMAA has helped thousands of college students with scholarships, thus lessening their financial costs and allowing them to better focus on their academic work and prepare for their future endeavors. Moreover, since its founding, the AMAA has supported the education of tens of thousands of Armenian students at all levels in the Near East, Europe, Continental United States, and Armenia. The AMAA also provides generous and abundant financial aid to schools and institutions of higher education in the Near East, including Haigazian University and the Near East School of Theology in Beirut.

The scholarships granted this year were provided from several AMAA scholarship funds established over the years to support these deserving students. Students may request applications from AMAA Headquarters in Paramus, NJ beginning in January of each year. The deadline to submit applications for the 2023-2024 academic year is May 1, 2023. 🇺🇸



Haigazian Holds 62nd Annual Commencement Exercises

By **Mira Yardemian**, *Director of Haigazian University Public Relations*

Haigazian University marked the end of a successful 2021-2022 academic year by holding its 62nd Annual Commencement exercises, on Friday June 3, 2022, at 7:00 p.m. on its campus in Kantari, Beirut.

In an atmosphere of joy and relief, 107 undergraduates and graduates received their bachelor and master's degrees at the first in-person ceremony since the COVID-19 pandemic began in 2020. The event was streamed live on Facebook to allow a larger number of proud onlookers watch their loved ones as they embark into a new phase of their lives.

The auspicious ceremony started with the processional march on the notes of the traditional Pomp and Circumstance by Sir Edward Elgar, whereby faculty proceeded in their traditional academic regalia of caps, gowns, and hoods, followed by graduates. After the Lebanese National Anthem, Campus Minister Rev. Wilbert Van Saane offered the Prayer of Invocation.

In her inspiring keynote speech, UNESCO Director of the Regional Bureau of Education in the Arab States Costanza Farina focused on the values of UNESCO (The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) which are also shared by and implemented by Haigazian University.

"UNESCO strongly believes that education, higher education, and lifelong learning are a public good. We support the right to higher education and advocate for inclusive and equitable quality higher education and lifelong learning opportunities for all," said Ms. Farina inviting all graduates to become UNESCO Ambassadors in this respect.

Tackling the Lebanese economic crisis, Ms. Farina concluded her speech with a message of hope. "While crises have caused some setbacks, Lebanon is making strides to again be a shining light of knowledge and learning in the region and beyond. You are the key element of that process; you are

Lebanon's greatest asset," she said.

University President Rev. Dr. Paul Haidostian expressed his pride in the graduating class, acknowledging the unwavering efforts and dedication of the administrative and teaching body, the students, and their parents during these unprecedented times, asking the audience to give them a hearty applause.

In his address, Rev. Dr. Haidostian focused on the notion of "tomorrow's educator," and on ways of finding "the balance in the human experience." Answering the question of "who will teach our children, what, where, when and how," Rev. Dr. Haidostian said, "even if machines are the medium, the question is which machine, with what method, what content and for what purpose. In the midst of all, it is our role to keep people in healthy balance."

He went further to explain that the main question concerns "tomorrow," telling graduates that "they will be entrusted with the task of leading the way." "Will you be there, graduates, to show the skills, to dedicate the

time, to position yourself in service, to lead by example, and most importantly, to exhibit the type of sensitive spirit that is sparkling, transparent, trustworthy, self-fulfilled and dedicated to the highest of what humans can become, as I believe God created us to be," said Rev. Dr. Haidostian.

Inspiring valedictory addresses were delivered by graduates Alek Galhayan and Aya Taher. They both expressed their deep gratitude to all the parents, University faculty and staff, acknowledging all their efforts and investment in shaping and equipping them to embark on their new phase of life.

Graduates Garen Kazandjian and Nour AlDaouk accompanied by Ari Vartanian on the piano graciously performed the song "The Prayer."

The Ceremony concluded by singing the Alma Mater, followed by the Benediction offered by the University's Former Campus Minister Rev. L. Nishan Bakalian.

Commencement fever rippled in the air as mortarboard hats and waves of resounding cheers went skyward! 🎓



CLASS OF 2022

Congratulations to all
graduates from worldwide
Armenian Evangelical Schools
supported by AMAA



Anjar School



Armenian Evang. College - Beirut



Bethel School - Aleppo



Merdinian School - California, USA



Central High School, Ashrafieh, Beirut



Shamlian Tatigian School, Nor Marash



Avedisian School, Yerevan



Kessab School



Near East School of Theology - Class of 2022

Congratulations to the Class of 2022 of the Near East School of Theology (NEST) in Beirut, Lebanon. Among the graduates were three Armenian students - Armen Misakyan and Khachik Nazaryan from Armenia and Shant Aynilian from Beirut, Lebanon, and two Arab students.

May God be with them as they embark upon a new path in ministering wherever it takes them.

AMAA, the cornerstone of education within the Armenian Evangelical communities worldwide, also supports the Armenian students attending the Near East School of Theology.



The graduates present the NEST Class of 2022 plaque to the President.

L to R: George Shammass (B.Th.), Farah Boukheir (M.Div.), Dr. George Sabra (President of NEST), Shant Aynilian (Dipl. in Theol. Studies), Armen Misakyan (M.Div.), Khachik Nazaryan (M. Div.).



AEUNA Holds its 26th Biennial General Assembly in Philadelphia

On June 23-26, the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America (AEUNA) held its 26th Biennial General Assembly in Philadelphia hosted by the Armenian Martyrs' Congregational Church of Havertown. In addition to the delegates from the AEUNA churches, the affiliated organizations – AMAA and Stephen Philibosian Foundation were present. The total number of attendees was over 200.

The theme of the Convention was “Bold Love,” and the main speaker was Rev. Dr. Ron Tovmassian.

AMAA was represented by its Executive Director/CEO Zaven Khanjian who reported on AMAA activities to the General Assembly and shared remarks on AMAA relations with AEUNA churches.

During the Sunday morning Worship Service, the newly elected AEUNA Board members were installed along with Rev. Hendrik Shanazarian as the Minister to the Union.





Visit With Prelate Arch. Anoushavan Tanielian

On Friday, July 29, 2022 AMAA Executive Director/CEO Zaven Khanjian, along with Rev. Dr. Haig Kherlopien, Pastor of the Armenian Evangelical Church of New York, and Rev. Joseph Garabedian, Pastor of the Armenian Presbyterian Church of Paramus, NJ visited His Eminence Archbishop Anoushavan Tanielian, Prelate of the Armenian Prelacy of the Eastern United States. Very Rev. Fr. Barouyr Shernezian, Dean of the Theological Seminary, who is visiting the United States, also participated in the meeting. Mr. Khanjian congratulated Archbishop Tanielian on his re-election as Prelate and wished him God's abundant blessings. During the meeting, views were exchanged about the post-COVID experiences in different churches.

L to R: Rev. Joseph Garabedian, Fr. Barouyr Shernezian, Archbishop Anoushavan Tanielian, Zaven Khanjian and Rev. Dr. Haig Kherlopien.



AMAA Sunday at the Armenian Presbyterian Church of Paramus, NJ



On Sunday, May 22, 2022, AMAA Controller Nerses Rastguelenian, representing the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA), joined the Armenian Presbyterian Church in Paramus, NJ for the Sunday morning Worship Service to share and to bear witness to the vast outreach of the Association, the missionary arm of the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America (AEUNA).

The congregation listened intently as Nerses both shared God's word of love and described the worldwide outreach of the AMAA.

The congregation was reminded of God's goodness as the photos of the many Armenian children who were being blessed by the various ministries of the Association appeared on the screen.

After the presentation, a light lunch was served, and Nerses and the AMAA Paramus staff fellowshiped with the congregation and discussed more concrete possibilities of participation in the ministries offered. All were blessed by the presentation and the fellowship, and the congregation was further encouraged by the good work that God is doing in and through the AMAA worldwide.



AMAC Holds Retreat to Celebrate 175th Anniversary of Armenian Evangelical Church

By **Lara Kassardjian**, Board Member of First Armenian Evangelical Church of Montreal

The Armenian Missionary Association of Canada (AMAC) held a one-day retreat on Saturday, July 16, 2022, to celebrate the 175th Anniversary of the Armenian Evangelical Church. It was the AMAC's first retreat in three years due to restrictions from the COVID pandemic.

The retreat was held at the Grace United Church in beautiful Gananoque, Ontario. Congregants from the four Armenian Evangelical Churches of Canada were excited to once again be part of this long awaited post-COVID gathering and be able to travel by bus just like the pre-COVID days.

Participants began the day with fellowship over coffee and sweets and were invited into the church sanctuary. Rev. Takouhi Demirdjian-Petro, Pastor of the local Church, welcomed the attendees and then Raffi Shnorhokian, AMAC President, offered his welcoming greetings and led the congregation in a worship service. It was beautiful to see the participants wholeheartedly praising the Lord, with Armenian hymns and worship songs.

Rev. Georges Dabbo, Pastor of First Armenian Evangelical Church of Montreal, invited the attendees into prayer and presented the guest speaker, Dr. Setrag Khosafian, from Boston, MA.



Dr. Khoshafian's presentation was titled: "Armenian Evangelical Movement - Blessings and 21st Century Challenges. The journey continues..." He gave a glimpse into the history of the Armenian Evangelicals and their contributions to the world. He then described the timeline of the different emerging trends throughout the years, all the way to the new challenges we are facing in our modern era. He completed his speech with examples of ways to rekindle and revive who we are as Armenian Evangelicals. Solutions included Bible studies, new songs, and new Christian literature, reaching out to new generations, and preaching the Gospel to different nations (even Muslims). Let us all take what we learned and discovered here at heart, and go back to our churches, revived, and replenished, ready to do even more for God's kingdom.

Having filled our minds and hearts, it was now time for filling our appetites, in true Armenian fashion. What better way to do so, than with some delicious Montreal lahmajoun and chikoeft? Afterwards, some of the attendees went on a sight-seeing tour or a boat cruise of the 1000 Islands, while others stayed back and enjoyed fellowship time with friends they hadn't seen in years. After the leisurely time, all headed back to the church

basement, to enjoy coffee and dessert, and to celebrate a birthday.

Following the coffee break, everyone returned to the church sanctuary to participate in the AMAC Members' meeting, headed by Mr. Shnorhokian. He presented the work that AMAC is involved in, whether it be in Armenia/Artsakh, Lebanon, Syria, or Canada. True to its mission, AMAC helps with Child Sponsorship programs, as well as Kindergartens, Scholarships and other programs.

AMAC was created 38 years ago. It was interesting to see that some of the founding fathers of AMAC, for example Hagop Basmadjian and Mihran Jizmejjan, were still part of the committee today. Mr. Jizmejjan had requested to officially retire from the AMAC Board, and he was awarded with a commemorative plaque for his many years of dedicated service to the AMAC. Mrs. Jizmejjan was presented with a bouquet of flowers and new committee members were presented to the congregation and prayed over by Rev. Dabbo.

The afternoon continued with a communion service and ended with worship songs. All participating families received a parting gift consisting of Rev. Demirdjian-Petro's book "The TRUE Gift Lives ON...", as well as "The Thousand Islands" souvenir book.

What a nice conclusion to an amazing and beautiful day. We all departed and returned home with new memories and a newfound zeal to pursue our individual and collective mission to follow God, and to love and serve wholeheartedly. 🇸🇪



AMAC President Raffi Shnorhokian awards Mihran Jizmejjan with a commemorative plaque for his many years of dedicated service to AMAC.



ԱՀԱԸ-ի Նախագահ՝ Տօքթ. Նազարէթ Տարագճեանի պատգամը, Ստեփանաւանի նորակառույց Կեդրոնի բացման եւ վերանորոգուած Հայ Աւետարանական եկեղեցաշէնքի վերընծայման հանդիսաւոր պաշտամունքին՝ Կիրակի Յուլիս 3, 2022-ին

(Բ. Մնացորդաց 6.17-21 եւ Ա. Պետրոս 2.1-10)

Տօքթ. Նազարէթ Է. Տարագճեան

Այս առաւօտ մենք հոս եկած ենք աշխարհի շատ մը անկիւններէն, նորակառույց շէնք մը նուիրելու Աստուծոյ գործին՝ շինուած դարաւոր մեր սեփական մայրենի հողին վրայ։ Թէեւ այս շէնքը տաճար մը չէ, բայց կանգնած է եկեղեցաշէնքին քով եւ պիտի ծառայէ այս եկեղեցիին եւ Ամերիկայի Հայ Աւետարանական Ընկերակցութեան ծրագիրները իրականացնելու համար։ Այս շէնքը կեդրոն մը պիտի ըլլայ, ուր պիտի հաւաքուին մանուկներ եւ չափահասներ, որպէսզի Ֆիզիքական եւ հոգեւոր սնունդ ստանան, առիթը ունենան Քրիստոսը մօտէն ճանչնալու եւ փառք տան Աստուծոյ բոլոր անոնց համար, որոնք կարելի կը դարձնեն այս Աստուածահանոյ աշխատանքները Ստեփանաւան քաղաքին մէջ։

Քիչ առաջ կարդացուած առաջին հատուածին մէջ տեսանք թէ Սողոմոն Թագաւոր, Դաւիթի որդին, շինել տուաւ տաճար մը եւ հոն գետեղեց Աստուծոյ ուխտի տապանակը։ Այս ուխտի տապանակը փայտէ սնտուկ մըն էր, որ Մովսէս շինել տուած էր եւ անոր մէջ դրուած էին այն քարերը, որոնց վրայ տասը պատուիրանները փորագրուած էին։ Այս տապանակին մէջ կար նաեւ կուժ մը լեցուն մանանա, ինչպէս նաեւ Ահարոնի գաւազանը։ Այս տապանակը գԱստուած կը ներկայացներ Իսրայէլի ժողովուրդին համար եւ երբ Սողոմոն բերաւ այդ տապանակը եւ դրաւ խորանին ետեւը, որ կը կոչուէր Սրբոլիւն Սրբոց, իրենք այդ գոհունակութիւնը ունեցան, թէ Աստուած այլեւս մնայուն տուն մը ունի եւ ալ թափառական չէ։

Սողոմոն Թագաւոր հարուստ թագաւոր մըն էր եւ ոչ մէկ ջանք չէր խնայած, որ Երուսաղէմի տաճարն ալ ըլլար գեղեցիկ եւ հարուստ։ Լիբանանէն ի վեր մայրի ծառեր բերել տուած էր եւ անոնց փայտով պատած էր տաճարին ներսիղին։ Նոյնպէս կը կարդանք թէ տաճարը կարուցող վարպետը լիբանանի Կրքաքէն եկած էր, որ հիմա Սուր կը կոչուի։ Պատմաբաններ կը խորհին թէ Սողոմոն Թագաւոր Քրիստոսէ մօտ տասը դար առաջ ապրած է։ Տաճարը շինուելէ 400 տարի ետք, Բաբելոնի զօրքերը կու գան եւ կը գրաւեն Երուսաղէմ քաղաքը եւ զայն քար ու քանդ կ'ընեն, մէջը ըլլալով Սողոմոնի տաճարը։ Այս խառն ի ճաղանճին մէջ ուխտի տապանակն ալ կը կորսուի եւ որեւէ տեղեկագրութիւն չկայ Սուրբ Գիրքին մէջ, թէ ինչ կը պատահի անոր։

Բաբելոնի գերութենէն վերջ հրեաները անգամ մը եւս շինեցին Երուսաղէմի տաճարը՝ Քրիստոսէ հինգ-վեց դար առաջ, Եգրասի եւ Նեմեայի ժամանակները։ Այս երկրորդ տաճարն ալ քանդուեցաւ Հռովմայեցիներուն կողմէ ԲԵ 70 թուին։ Այս երկրորդ տաճարը այն էր, որուն մէջ Յիսուս կը վիճաբանէր քահանաներուն հետ եւ կը սորվեցներ ժողովուրդին։ Այս էր այն տաճարը ուրկէ ան վտարեց անոնց, որոնք Աստուծոյ տունը շուկայի վերածած էին։ Այս էր այդ տաճարը, որուն քանդումը Յիսուս մարգարէացաւ երբ ըսաւ քար մը քարի վրայ պիտի չմնայ։

Սողոմոն Թագաւոր կը կարծէր թէ իր շինած քարաշէն տաճարին մէջ Աստուած պիտի տեղաւորուի եւ ապրի յաւիտեան եւ անշուշտ այս տաճարը Երուսաղէմի մէջ պետք էր որ ըլլար՝ Սուրբ քաղաքին մէջ։

Իսկ Յիսուսի գաղափարը բոլորովին տարբեր էր։ Ինչպէս կը տեսնենք, Յովհաննու Աւետարանին չորրորդ գլուխին մէջ, ուր Յիսուս կը խօսի Սամարացի կնկան հետ եւ կ'ըսէ. - «Ժամանակ պիտի գայ, որ ոչ այս լեռան վրայ (այսինքն Սամարիայի մէջ) եւ ոչ ալ Երուսաղէմի մէջ երկրպագութիւն պիտի ընէք Հօրը, վասնզի Աստուած Հոգի է եւ ճշմարիտ երկրպագողները երգրպագութիւն պիտի ընեն Հօրը հոգիով ու ճշմարտութիւնով։

Աստուած տաճարներու պէտք չունի հոն ապրելու համար եւ ոչ ալ պէտք ունի մինչեւ Երուսաղէմ երթալու զինք գտնելու համար։ Աստուած կ'ուզէ բնակիլ մեր սրտերուն մէջ եթէ մենք պատրաստ ենք զինք ընդունելու։

Եւրոպայ լեցուն է տաճարներով որոնք հարուստ են արուեստի գործերով, մարմարէ արձաններով, եւ որոնք միլիոններ կ'արժեն։ Բայց յաճախ կը լսենք որ այդ եկեղեցիները Կիրակի առաւօտ պարապ կ'ըլլան, եւ յաճախ զրօսաշրջիկներէն նուէրներ կ'ակնկալեն որպէսզի կարենան շէնքերուն նորոգութիւնները ապահովել։

Սիրելիներ, Աստուած պարապ տաճարներու մէջ չի բնակիր եւ Աստուծոյ հաճելի գոհը խոնարհ եւ կոտրած սիրտն է։ Այս նոյն գաղափարը կը տեսնենք կարդացուած երկրորդ հատուածին մէջ, ուր Պետրոս Առաքեալ հաւատացեալները կը նմանցնէ կենդանի քարերու, որոնք իրարու քով գալով կը շինեն հոգեւոր տաճար մը, Սուրբ Քահանայութիւն, եւ ուր Յիսուս Քրիստոսի ձեռքով Աստուծոյ հաճելի հոգեւոր պատարագներ պիտի մատուցանեն։ Իսկ այս տաճարին անկիւնաքարը պիտի ըլլայ Յիսուս Քրիստոս՝ այն քարը զոր շինողները անարգեցին։

Ուրեմն իմաստ չունի շէնքեր կառուցանել, յարկ յարկի վրայ բարձրացնել եւ գեղեցկաբար կահաւորել եթէ այդ շէնքին մէջ պիտի չըլլան անհատներ, որոնք իրենց հաւատքով կանգուն պիտի պահեն այդ շէնքը եւ ցոյացնեն Աստուծոյ սէրը բոլոր անոնց, որոնք այնտեղ մուտք կը գործեն։

Մեր աղօթքն է այսօր, որ այս նորակառույց շէնքը միմիայն ծառայէ Աստուծոյ գործին, շատ մը հոգիներ Աստուծոյ առաջնորդէ, մինչեւ որ մենք ալ արժանանանք կոչուելու ընտիր ցեղ, թագաւորական քահանայութիւն եւ սուրբ ազգ։ Որպէս առաքեալներ մենք պարտականութիւն ունինք օգնելու ուրիշ առաքեալներու, որոնք նեղութեան մէջ են եւ օգնութեան կարիքը ունին։ Եւ դարձեալ մենք առաքեալներ կ'ըլլանք երբ մենք կը տրամադրենք մեր բոլոր կարելի մեր եկեղեցիին, մեր համայնքին եւ անկէ բխած Հայ Աւետարանական Ընկերակցութեան։ Մենք այսօր, բոլորս կանչուած ենք Քրիստոսի առաքեալները ըլլալու։ Չմերժենք Իր կոչը։



ՆԿԱՐԱԳԻՐ

ԱՀԱԸ-ի Գործադիր Տնօրեն՝ Զաւէն Խանճեանի պատգամը, Ստեփանաւանի նորակառույց Կեդրոնի բացման եւ վերանորոգուած Հայ Աւետարանական եկեղեցաշէնքի վերընծայման հանդիսաւոր պաշտամունքին՝ Կիրակի Յուլիս 3, 2022-ին

Զաւէն Խանճեան

Ուստի Աստուծոյ ընտրեալ սուրբերու եւ սիրելիներու պէս ձեր վրայ հազէք գուրբ, ողորմութիւնը, քաղցրութիւնը, խոնարհութիւնը, հեղուքիւնը, երկայնամտութիւնը, իրարու համբերելով եւ իրարու ներելով՝ եղձ մէկը մեկուն դէմ տրտունջ մը ունենայ. Ինչպէս Քրիստոս ձեզի ներեց, նոյնպէս ալ դուք: Եւ այս ամէն բաներուն վրայ սէրը հազէք որ կատարելութեան կապն է:

Կողոսացիս 3. 12-14

Օրուայ նիւթի բիրեղացման փոթորիկին մէջ առնակատման մը դէմ հանդիման կը գտնուիմ: Ինչ է որ կը յիշատակենք այսօր: Ստեփանաւանի նորոգուած եկեղեցւոյ նաւակատի՞քը, Աւետարանականի Ստեփանաւանի նոր կեդրոնի նուիրումը, թէ Հայաստանայց Աւետարանական եկեղեցւոյ 175-ամեակը: Գուցէ եւ այս երե՛քը: Պատասխանատուութեան ծիրին մէջ էր այսօրուայ ձեռնարկներու ծրագիրը: Հակառակ անոր հանգիստ չեմ այս նիւթով եւ կը փոթորկի միտքս: Մտածումներս զիս կ'ուղղեն Աստուծոյ խօսքին: Կը բանամ Աստուածաշունչը: Յովհաննու Աւետարանի առաջին գլխուն առաջին հինգ համարները: Բոլորս ծանօթ ենք այս խօսքերուն որոնք գուցէ Աստուածաբանութեան խորունկ եւ ծաւալուն տարածութիւնը կ'ընդգրկեն: Աստուած Ստեղծիչն է այն բոլորին որ գոյութիւն ունի: Աստուած Այլքան եւ Օմէկան է: Սկիզբն ու վերջը: Սկիզբի եւ վերջի միջոցին՝ Աստուածաշունչը կեանքի եւ մարդու մասին կը խօսի: Մարդը՝ Աստուծոյ ստեղծած ասուն մարդը, գոյութիւնը եւ ստեղծագործութիւնը կ'իմաստաւորէ: Երեւակայեցէք պահ մը տիեզերքը առանց մարդու գոյութեան: Է՛ր առաջ, չէ՛: Բայց «մարդ»ու հասկացողութեան մէջ առանց անոր գոյութեան վերելի երեք առիթները անիմաստ եւ անգոյ են: Աւետարանականի հարիւրամեակի նուիրում եւ «Հարիւրամեայ Յանձնառութիւն» խորագրուած յօդուածի մը մէջ հետեւեալը ընդգծած եմ որպէս Աւետարանականի ուխտը մեր ժողովուրդին:

«Ո՛չ կայսրութիւններ եւ ո՛չ կառոյցներ: Մեր ուշադրութեան առարկան հայ անհատն է:

«Մենք կ'ուխտենք բարեփոխել անհատին կեանքը: Մեր հաւաքական գործունէութիւնը կարելի է ամփոփել այն հասկացողութեամբ թէ մենք ինչպէ՛ս կարող ենք ազդել մեր ժողովուրդի հոգեւոր եւ ֆիզիքական բարեկեցութեան վրայ:»

Ուրեմն բարեփոխել անհատին կեանքը զայն դարձնելով հայելին Կողոսացիս 3.12-14 համարներուն ուր բաղձալի նկարագրի ընդհանրական պատկեր մը գծուած է:

Գտած էի օրուայ խորհուրդի կորիզը: Թէ ինչ որ կը յիշատակենք այսօր, ըլլայ այդ այս գեղատեսիլ կառոյցը եւ կամ բազմանպատակ ծառայութեան նուիրումը կողքի նորակառոյց կեդրոնը եւ կամ 175-ամեայ Հայաստանայց Աւետարանական եկեղեցին եւ իր առաքելութիւնը, նպատակը մարդ արարածին հասնիլն է եւ զայն առաջնորդել իր Ստեղծիչի պատկերին:

Այդ ճանապարհին վրայ մարդը «նկարագիր» ունենալու է: Մալխասեան բառարանը այսպէս կը սահմանէ «նկարագիր» բառին իմաստը: Վարք, բարոյական կողմի պատկեր: Անձի մը բնութեան պատկերացումը խօսքերու միջոցաւ: «Լաւ նկարագրի տէր մարդ չէ» կ'ըսենք եւ կամ «Ծատ փայլուն նկարագիր ունի»:

Նկարագիր:

Մեր առաքելութիւնը՝ որպէս Աւետարանական եւ կամ Հայ Աւետարանական եկեղեցի այդ նկարագրի պատրաստութեան խրթին գործին մէջ կը կայանայ: Մաքուր, անբասիր նկարագիր:

Նկարագիր:

Աւետարանականի եւ եկեղեցիին տեսիլքը՝ հայ մարդու, հայ քաղաքացիի էութեան կոփումին մէջ կ'ընդգրկէ՝ խարսախուած ուղղամտութիւն, վերահա՛ս անխարդախ բարոյականութեան, ջատագով՝ ընկերային արդարութեան, խղճի, խօսքի եւ արտայայտուելու ազատութեան: Քաղաքացի՝ որ կը ներքողէ կամաւոր եւ նուիրումը ոգիով ծառայութիւն, կը յարգէ մարդկային իրաւունքները եւ պատրաստ է զոհուելու հայրենիքի համար: Քաղաքացի՝ որ կը սիրէ իր եղբայրը, իր Ստեղծիչը եւ իր կեանքով, բարի օրինակ է այլոց, ցուցնելով Քրիստոսի խաչելութեամբ ցուցաբերուած անսահման սէրը իր չորսդին:

Նկարագիր:

Նկարագիր՝ որ մարդը դուրս կը հանէ իր նկարէն, իր Եսէն, ինքզինքը իր էութեան կորիզը դարձնելու մարմաշէն, խոնարհելով Աստուծոյ ներկայութեան առջեւ, մաքրամաքուր, անանձնասէր, զոհաբերող եւ Քրիստոնէականի կեանքի մը կենդանի վկայութեամբ:

Այսօր՝ մարդ արարածի մեծագոյն ախտը անհատական նկարագրի հետ առնչուած է: Նեխած, եղծուած, անմաքուր եւ պատիր:

Նկարագիրն է որ զգետնած է մարդը եւ նկարագիրն է որ զայն պիտի յառնէ:

Այսօր, ինչ որ ալ ըլլայ մեր յիշատակումը, Աւետարանականի եւ եկեղեցիի հաւաքական յանձնառութիւնը պիտի ըլլայ հա-հաւատքի, ստեղծագործութեան, գիտութեան եւ քաղաքա-կրթութեան փարոս մը դարձնել այս հայրենիքը եւ այլուր, որու լուսաւոր ջահը պէտք է երկարի շրջապատի լայնածաւալ խաւարին մէջ, արդարացնելով մեր ստեղծումի եւ գոյութեան

Շարունակութիւնը էջ 51...



Հայաստանյայց Ավետարանական Եկեղեցու Մարտահրավերն Այսօր

Վեր. Հովհաննես Հովսեփյան՝ Աւագ Հոգևոր Հովիվ Հայաստանյայց Ավետարանական Եկեղեցու – Երեվան

Միայն թե Քրիստոսի Ավետարանին վայել կերպով ապրեք, որպեսզի ձեզ տեսնելու գամ, թե հեռու լինեմ, ձեր մասին լսեմ, որ հաստատուն եք մեկ հոգով ու մեկ շնչով, պատերազմում եք Ավետարանի հավատի համար
Փիլիպպեցիներին 1.27

Հայաստանյայց Ավետարանական Եկեղեցին 176 տարեկան է:

Իր կազմավորման օրից մինչ այսօր ՀԱԵ-ն մեծ կարևորություն է տվել իր կոչմանն ու առաքելությանը, որ է.

- **Քարոզել Քրիստոսի ավետարանի պատգամն աշխարհասփյուռ հայությանը և օգնել մարդկանց անձնապես ճանաչել, սիրել ու հնազանդվել Աստծուն:**
 - **Հայրենանվեր ու հայրենասիրական ծառայություն մատուցել հայ ժողովրդին իրենց գտնված վայրերում:**
- Նմանօրինակ ընթացքն արձանագրված ու փաստված է անցյալի պատմության էջերում:

ՀԱԵ-ի պատմության էջերը թերթելիս՝ գրեթե յուրաքանչյուր հանգրվանում միշտ ակնդիր ենք լինում այդ օրերի մարտահրավերներին ու դրանք դիմագրավելու կոչերին:

176 տարի անց, ՀԱԵ-ն այսօր էլ դիմագրավում է բազմապիսի մարտահրավերների և քիչ չեն նաև այսօր հնչող կոչերը: Կախված աշխարհագրական դիրքից, երկրի տնտեսական և քաղաքական ներկա վիճակից՝ Հայաստանյայց Ավետարանական եկեղեցիները միգրացիոն տարբերվում են իրենց առօրյա մարտահրավերներով, բայց դրանք ընդհանրացնող մեկ ուղղություն կա, որը բոլորիս համար այլևս գերխնդիր է: Այդ խնդիրը մեր անվանը և կոչմանը հավատարիմ մնալու և ապրելու մեջ է:

Իսկ մեր անունը Հայաստանյայց Ավետարանական Եկեղեցի է:

ՀԱԵ-ն այսօր «Հայաստանյայց» մնալու մարտահրավերն ունի:

Հայրենիքի սահմաններից ներս և դուրս, հայրենիքում և աշխարհով մեկ ցրված հայության մեջ, հային հայ պահելու, հայ լեզվամտածողությանը, մշակույթին ու ժառանգությանը տեղ կանգնեցնելու դժվարության առջև ենք կանգնած: Անցյալում ձևավորված ավետարանական հարուստ ժառանգությունը հայ գիրն է՝ իր հոգևոր և հայրենասիրական հոգվածներով ու հրապարակումներով: Մտավորականությունն է՝ իր եկեղեցակենտրոն կյանքով, եկեղեցիներում ակտիվ ներկայությամբ ու գործունեությամբ: Կիրակնօրյա պաշտամունքն ու քրիստոնեական դաստիարակության բոլոր բնագավառներում ավետարանի պատգամը ուսուցանելն է: Եվ այս ամենի հետ միասին անհատի հայեցի, հոգևոր հոգեկերտումն է, որոնք ցավոք սրտի այսօր անժառանգ են մնում:

Որքան էլ որ ժամանակի մարտահրավերները մեզ առաջնորդում են ճկունության, որքան էլ որ հասանելի լինելու մեթոդները մեզ խրախուսում են ավելի լայն մտածողության, մենք երբեք չպետք է կորցնենք զգոնությունը՝ մեր առաքելության մեջ մեր անվանը հավատարիմ քայլելու, մնալու «Հայաստանյայց» հայրենիքում և դրա սահմաններից դուրս:

Այսօր որքանով ենք կարևորում մեր «Հայաստանյայց» լինելը և ի՞նչ ենք անում դրա համար:

ՀԱԵ-ն այսօր «Ավետարանական» մնալու մարտահրավերն ունի:

«Ավետարանական» անունն ուղղություն չէ, հարանվանություն չէ, մեր ինքնությունը և ով լինելը վկայակոչող տերմին չէ, մնացյալ եկեղեցիներից մեր տարբերանշանը չէ:

«Ավետարանական» անունը մեզ ավետարանին է կապում, ավետարանի վրա է հենում: Մենք չենք հենվում գաղափարի,

Շարունակություն էջ 50-Էն...

Աստուածային առաջադրանքը: «Կեանքը անով էր, ու կեանքը մարդոց յոյսն էր: Եւ յոյսը խաւարի մէջ կը յուսաւորէր, ու խաւարը զանիկա ճանչցաւ:» Մենք այդ յոյսին պատկերը ունենալու կոչուած ենք: Մենք այդ յոյսին պատկերը ցոլացնելու կոչուած ենք:

Կառոյցը, Կեդրոնը եւ կամ Եկեղեցին ողջունելի են, բայց փրկութեան թեկնածուն մարդն է: Այսօր եւ ամէն օր, յիշատակի

արժանի են եւ մեր ուշադրութեան կիզակետը մարդն է: Կերտելու այն մարդը՝ որու յոյսն ալ խաւարը կը յուսաւորէ, որպէսզի անգամ մը եւս Դիողինես՝ օր ցերեկով լապտեր մը ձեռքին մարդ փնտրելու ահաւոր յուսախաբութենէ տարուած իր շուրջը հաւաքուողներուն չկրկնէ «Ես մարդ կանչեցի, դուք ինչո՞ւ եկաք:»

Նկարագիր:

Որու ընդմէջէն Բանը, Քրիստոս Աստուած, կը ցոլայ:

Ծանիր գժեզ՝ մարդ Աստուծոյ:

Ամէն:

արժեհամակարգի, սկզբունքների վրա: Ավետարանն անձ է, ավետարանը նույն ինքը Քրիստոսն է՝ Իր ծնունդով, կյանքով, ուսուցումներով, նշաններով ու հրաշքներով, Իր փրկարար մահով, հարությանը և համբարձմամբ:

«Ավետարանական» անունը մեզ կապում է Քրիստոսին, իսկ եկեղեցական բեմը դարձնում Քրիստոսի ավետարանի մատակարարման միակ հարթակը: Առանց Քրիստոսի և Իր ավետարանի քարոզչության և ուսուցման, առանց ապաշխարության և անձի անհատական հոգևոր փորձառության՝ աստվածն անաշուղտության, առանց քրիստոսակենտրոն առաքելության և անձի հոգևոր կերտմանն ու աճին նպաստող ծառայությունների, ավետարանական անունը կորցնում է իր ուղղությունը, գորությունն ու հենարանը:


Այսօր որքա՞ն հաճախ է քարոզվում Քրիստոսի ավետարանը մեր ավետարանական բեմերից:

ՀԱՅ-ն այսօր «Եկեղեցի» մնալու մարտահարվերն ունի:

Եկեղեցին մարդածին չէ, բայց կազմված է մարդկանցից, եկեղեցին մարդկանց հավաքականությունն է, բայց այդ հավաքն ինքնասպասարկ չէ, այդ հավաքը մեզ եկեղեցի չի դարձնում, եթե այդ հավաքվածները կանչված չեն Աստծուց. կանչված աշխարհից դեպի Աստված, Իր Որդու փրկարար արյունով գնված, Սբ. Հոգու ներգործությամբ ամեն օր վերափոխվելու և կերտվելու Քրիստոսի հասակին և մտքին, վերադառնալու դեպի աշխարհ և դառնալու Աստծո ղեապանները, Իր Թագավորության համար ապրող, գործող անհատներ և հավաքականություն: Պողոսը հիշեցնում է մեզ մեր իրական քաղաքացիության և պատականելիության մասին Փիլ. 3.20-ում:

Եկեղեցին կանչված է «աշխարհի մեջ, բայց ոչ աշխարհից» սկզբունքով (Հովհ. 17.11,14): Եկեղեցին կանչված է լինել եկեղեցի իր գտնված վայրում՝ բարձր պահելով Աստծո Թագավորության սկզբունքները: Կանչված է ապրելու քաղաքի ու գյուղի մեջ և ներսից հետևելով հասարակական կյանքի անցուղարձին՝ Աստծո Խոսքի վրա հենված կեցվածք, դիրք ու կարծիք արտահայտել, բարձրաձայնել Աստծո սերը ատելության և անհանդուրժողականության նկատմամբ, Աստծո արդարարությունը՝ անարդարության և բարոյագուրկ դրսևորումների նկատմամբ, Աստծո խաղաղությունը՝ պատերազմների մեջ տառապող հասարակությունների, անխաղաղ ընտանիքներում ցավ քաշող մարդկանց նկատմամբ:

ՀԱՅ եկեղեցին այսօր թափուր բեմեր և հոգևոր կոչումի, ծառայության և գործի նկատմամբ անտարբերության մարտահրավերն ունի: Մշակների համար աղոթելը, մշակներ պատրաստելն ու այդ մշակներին ծառայության դաշտ ապահովելն այսօր արդեն իսկ մեծ խնդիր է: Եկեղեցին եկեղեցի է, երբ մնալուս պտուղներ է ունենում՝ Որթի վրա ամուր կառչած մնալով: Այսօր մեր հինգ ՀԱՅ միություններում այս թափուր բեմերը, հովիվների պակասը տեսնում ու զգում ենք: Այսօր լուրջ մարտահրավեր ունենք արժևորելու մեր ներկան և ապագայի տեսիլքով խոնարհվելու Աստծո առաջ ու ռազմավարական մոտեցում ցուցաբերելու մեր առջև ծառացած գեր խնդրին:

Այսօր, որպես եկեղեցի՝ ինչպե՞ս ենք արժևորում ինքներս մեզ, գնահատում մեր ներկան և ի՞նչ ենք անում ապագայի համար: 



175 Տարիներու Աւանդը

Ռոկո. Հրայր ՄԷԱԷՆԵԱՆ, Արաբական Ծոցի երկիրներու Աստուածաշունչի ընկերութեան ընդհանուր քարտուղար


Հայաստանեայց Աւետարանական եկեղեցիին նպատակը հայ ժողովուրդին կեանքին մէջ զարգացնել եւ ամրապնդել էր հոգեւոր եւ մտաւոր արժէքներ, որոնց հիմքը Աստուածաշունչի պատգամին ընկալումն էր իւրաքանչիւր հայու համար: Հայաստանեայց Աւետարանական եկեղեցիին այս առաքելութիւնը եթէ մէկ կողմէ իրագործեց եկեղեցական իմաստով բայց նոյքնան նաեւ կրթական, ընկերային, եւ մշակութային բնագաւառներէն ներս: Պատմական Հայաստանէն, Կիլիկիայէն, արեւելեան Հայաստան, Արցախ, եւ այսօր սփիւռքի շատ մը երկիրներու մէջ Հայաստանեայց Աւետարանական եկեղեցին մնաց հաւատարիմ իր այս կոչումին ու առաքելութեան՝ սատարելով հայ ժողովուրդին հոգեմտաւոր զարգացումին:

Հայաստանեայց Աւետարանական եկեղեցին չի հաւատաց ու մինչեւ այսօր թիւի ուժին: Անոր առաքելութիւնը հայ մարդուն հոգեւոր ուժը զարգացնելու համար է, որ պիտի սատարէ հայ ժողովուրդին կեանքի շարունակականութեան: Հոգեւոր ուժն է, որ կը կերտէ կեանք: Պատմութիւնը կը կերտուի եթէ թիւով բայց շատ աւելի հոգեմտաւոր կարողականութեամբ եւ գորութեամբ: Այս իմաստով, հայ ժողովուրդին կեանքին վերջին

175 տարիներու ժամանակահատուածին մէջ, Հայաստանեայց Աւետարանական եկեղեցին ունեցաւ իր կարեւոր ներդրումը հայապահպանումի եւ ազգապահպանումի կեանքի պատմութիւնը դնելով շարունակական գործընթացի մէջ: Եթէ պատմութիւնը իր անցեալով բայց նոյնքան այսօր ու ապագայի տեսլականով:

Յարգանքի եւ երախտագիտական խօսք Հայաստանեայց Աւետարանական եկեղեցիի հիմնադիր քառասուն անդամներուն: Բայց նոյնքան նաեւ անոր պատմութիւնը կերտած եւ մինչեւ այսօր իւրաքանչիւր եկեղեցական ու աշխարհական միտքին, որոնք ոչ մէկ ճիգ չի խնայեցին հայուն հոգեւոր արժէքները ու անոնց գնահատումը վառ պահելու համար:

Ծնորհաւոր 175 ամեակ եւ բարի երթ նոր ամեակներու: Նոր ամեակներ բայց մէկ կարեւոր տեսլական: Քրիստոսի, Եկեղեցիին ու հայ ժողովուրդին հոգեմտաւոր ու ազգային արժէքներու ամրապնդման ի խնդիր:

Այս Հայաստանեայց Աւետարանական եկեղեցիին 175 տարիներու աւանդն է, որ պիտի շարունակուի: 



Հայաստանեայց Աւետարանական Եկեղեցի Դատումներ եւ Դիտումներ

Դոկտ. Երուանդ Հ. Քասունի, պատմաբան, հեղինակ, եւ «Ձանաւեր»-ի Նախկին խմբագիր

Հայաստանեայց Աւետարանական Եկեղեցիի կազմաւորման 175-ամեակին առիթով երբ փորձ կը կատարուի աշխարհագրական եւ ժամանակագրական առումով վերաբժեւորելու այդ հանգրուանի պատմական դէպքերու հոլովոյթը, հարկ կ'ըլլայ ուշադրութիւն սեւեռել պատմագրութեան այն էջերուն, որոնք արձանագրուած են ոչ անպայման զարգացած իրողութեանց դրական գնահատանքով: 19-րդ դ. երկրորդ կէտ եւ 20-րդ դ. առաջին երկու տասնամեակի հայ պատմագրութեան ծանօթ հեղինակներու մօտ ուշադրութեան արժանի երեւոյթ է 1 Յուլիսի, 1846 թ. **Հայաստանեայց Աւետարանական Եկեղեցիի** կազմաւորման, եւ յաջորդ եօթնամեակի ընթացքին Օսմանեան Կայսրութեան Բողոքական Հասարակութեան ինքնուրոյն համայնք՝ **Բողոքական Միլլէթի** կազմաւորուելու մասին հրապարակուած սուլթանական երէք հրամանագիրներու(1) հանդէպ ցուցաբերուած վերաբերմունքը:

Աւետիս Պէրպէրեան (? - 1870 թ.), Կ. Պոլսոյ Ազգային Պատրիարքարանի քարտուղար եւ անմիջական ժամանակակիցը օրերը յուզող անցուդարձերուն, իր՝ 1769/72 – 1860 թթ. ժամանակաշրջանը ընդգրկող «Պատմութիւն Հայոց» աշխատասիրութեան ԾԷ. (57-րդ) գլուխը խորագրած է «Յաղագս Հերձուածոյ Բողոքական Հայոց», ուր կը կարդանք՝ «բողոքական հայոց» Հայ Եկեղեցիին դէմ բարձրացուցած «բողոք»ի ձայնին եւ անոր անաւանդներուն «ուրացում»ի մասին, Մատթէոս Զուխանեան Պատրիարքի (1844 – 1848 թթ.) փորձերուն, բողոքական հայերը համոզելու որ վերադառնան Մայր Եկեղեցիի գիրկը, ապա՝ Պատրիարքի 12 Յունուարի, 1846 թ. բանադրանքը, հալածեալ բողոքական հայերու ազատ պաշտամունքի իրաւունքը ձեռք բերելու համար դեսպանատուներուն՝ Պատրիարքարանի դէմ յարուցած բողոքն ու միջամտութիւնը պետութեան մօտ:

«Եւ յետ ամաց ինչ աւուրս Յակոբայ Պատրիարքին [(1839 - 1840, 1848 - 1856 թթ.)] դեսպանք Ամերիկա եւ Բրուսիոյ հանձնուցեալ ղեկավար Մեծն Բրիտանիոյ] զԳանիկն ընդ իւրեանս, խնդրեցին ի Բ. Դրան շնորհել բողոքական Հայոց զանկախութիւն զպատրիարքէն Հայոց. եւ Բ. Դրան ի շնորհս նոցա անջատեաց զնոսա իբրեւ որոշ ժողովուրդ, [15 Նոյեմբերի, 1850 թ.] տալով նոցա արքունի հրովարտակով զանկախութիւն զպատրիարքէն Հայոց, եւ եղև գլուխ նոցա Քրէստէնեան [Սերոբեան] Ստեփան [(1797 – 1865 թթ.)], եղբայր Յակոբայ Պատրիարքին Հայոց՝ մին ՚ի բանադրեցոյ անտի, զորմէ գրեցաք ՚ի վեր անդր. եւ եղաւ պատուանուն սոցա Էֆէնտի կամ Բրողեայան Էֆէնտիսի»(2): Բայց ոչ մէկ խօսք 1 Յուլիսի, 1846 թ. կազմաւորուած Հայաստանեայց Աւետարանական Եկեղեցիի,

ինչպէս եւ 1847 թ. Մեծ Վեզիր Բէշիտ Փաշայի ստորագրած հրամանագիրի մասին: Հեղինակը, «Պատմութիւն Հայոց»ի «Քրոնիկոն Աղիւսակ ժամանակագրական Յետ Քրիստոսի Դար ԺԸ.» բաժինով, «Յիշատակութիւնք Երեւելի Իրաց» խորագրի տակ կու տայ 18-րդ դ. (1769 – 1800 թթ., էջ 435-443) եւ 19-րդ դ. (1800 – 1860 թթ., էջ 444-621) «երեւելի» դէպքերու ժամանակագրութիւնը, ու երբ կը հասնի 1 Յուլիսի, 1846 թ. (էջ 544-545), կ'արձանագրէ. «Հրդեհ ՚ի Մէնիմէն. այրեցաւ շուկան եւ Պէզեստէնն [(կերպասի մթերանոց)]... [...] Ի Նէմրուտ քաղաքին Նիմուէի գտաւ աներակ մեծաշէն պալատի միում բազմասենեակ...»:

Իսկ ժամանակագրութեան 1850 տարեթիւի տակ (էջ 569-572) ոչ մէկ ակնարկութիւն 15 Նոյեմբերի, 1850 թուակիր սուլթանական հրամանագիրին մասին, որ Բողոքական հասարակութեան պետական ճանաչում կը շնորհէր եւ անկախ Բողոքական Համայնք կազմելու իրաւասութիւն: Ժամանակագրութեան 1853 տարեթիւի տակ նոյն լուրջութեամբ՝ 1853 թ. անձնապէս Բողոքական Համայնքի Ազգապետ Ստեփան Էֆ. Սերոբեանի ուղուած հրամանագիրի մասին:

Կը նշանակէ՝ հայ ժողովուրդի պատմութեան, ուրեմն՝ Հայ Եկեղեցիի պատմութեան մէջ վերոնշեալ իրողութիւնները «երեւելի» դէպքեր չէին հեղինակին համար, ու պիտի չմոռնալ վերյիշելու որ ան Պատրիարքարանի քարտուղարն էր:

Միւսիւրեան Վարդապետ Հայր Վարդան Ըստկարեան, 1872 թ. հրատարակած իր «Եկեղեցական Պատմութիւն Հանդերձ Ազգային Եկեղեցական Պատմութեամբ» աշխատասիրութեան մէջ կը գրէ. Ա.Մ. Նահանգներու եւ Մեծն Բրիտանիոյ «նորադանդ» եկեղեցիներու միսիոնարական շարժումները «աչուրնին գլխաւորաբար արեւելք դարձուցին: Թէեւ ամէն արեւելեան ազգերն որսալ կ'ուզէին, բայց տեսնելով որ Հայոց ազգը շատուորներէն է, մտադրութիւննին անելի անոր վրայ ուղղեցին: Ուստի այս դիտաւորութեամբ հայոց բնակած գլխաւոր քաղաքները՝ Կ. Պոլիս (1831 թ.), Չմիւռնիա (1834 թ.), Կարին ու Տրապիզոն քարոզիչներ խաւորեցին, հոն դասատուններ ու տպարաններ բացին, եւ թէ՛ գրաբար ու թէ՛ աշխարհաբար Աստուածաշունչ եւ ուրիշ գրքեր հրատարակելով եւ ժողովուրդեան ձրի բաժնելով, իրենց հետեւորդներ վաստկելու ետեւէ եղան: **Դժբախտութեամբ՝ գլխաւորաբար դրամական ուժով, կրցան մէկ քանի հոգի մոլորցնել:** Եւ թէպէտ ասոնք Կոստանդնուպոլսոյ պատրիարքէն եւ ընդհանրապէս Էջմիածնական կղերն շատ հակառակութիւն կրեցին, բայց բողոքական տէրութեանց միջամտութեամբը նոր աղանդը Օսմանեան տէրութենէն ազատութիւն ընդունելէն (1847 թ.) եւ իբրեւ առանձին կրօնական հասարակութիւն ճանաչուելէն

ետեւ, Կոստանդնուպոլիս, Չմիւռնիա, Կարին, Տրապիզոն, Պրոսա, Նիկոմեդիա, Անդապ եւ ուրիշ քաղաքներ բողոքական Հայոց հասարակութիւններ կազմուեցան...»(3) (ընդգծումը մեր կողմէ, Ե.Հ.Բ.):

Դժբախտաբար Հայր Ըստկարեան չի ճշդեր թէ այդ ո՞ր թուականին էր որ միսիոնարներ «գլխաւորաբար դրամական ուժով, կրցան մէկ քանի հոգի իրենց աղանդին մոլորեցնել»: Որպէսզի ընթերցողը չ«մոլորի», ճշդում մը կատարենք այդ «մոլորած»ներու թիւի մասին: Կ. Պոլսոյ Հայոց Պատրիարքարանի մօտիկ աղբիւրներու համաձայն, «Մատթէոս՝ Պատրիարք ըլլալուն պէս, իսկոյն միջոցներ ձեռք առաւ Բողոքականութեան դէմ: **Քննութիւն մը երեւան հանեց թէ հազարաւոր Հայ Բողոքականներ կան Կ. Պոլսոյ մէջ**»(4), գորոնք Սայր Եկեղեցիի գիրկը վերադարձնելու համար, Մատթէոս Պատրիարք, «իւր հրաժարումին օրը, 1848 Մարտի 1-ին, **յայտարարեց Գերագոյն Ժողովին մէջ թէ ծախսած է իւր քսակէն 37, 865 դրոշ Բողոքականութեան տարածումը արգիլելու համար**»(5) (ընդգծումները մեր կողմէ, Ե.Հ.Բ.):

Հետաքրքրական է որ Հայր Ըստկարեան կը յիշէ, թէ՛ «բողոքական տէրութեանց միջամտութեամբը նորադանդ Օսմանեան տէրութենէն ազատութիւն ընդունելէն (1847 թ.) եւ իբրեւ առանձին կրօնական հասարակութիւն ճանչցուելէն ետեւ...», բայց կը մոռնայ արձանագրել թէ մինչեւ 1847 թ., հակառակ Մատթէոս Պատրիարքի եւ Պատրիարքարանի «Բողոքականութեան տարածումը արգիլելու համար» ծախսած մեծղի գումարներուն ու հրապարակած յաջորդական երեք բանադրանքներուն(6), 1 Յուլիսի, 1846 թ. կը կազմաւորուէր Հայաստանեայց Աւետարանական Եկեղեցին:

Մելիքսերէկ Վրդ. Մուրատեանց (1836 - 1903 թթ.) իր Հայց. Առաքելական Եկեղեցիի նուիրում աշխատասիրութեան (1872 թ.) մէջ հակիրճ տողերով, հեռուէն, անկողմնակալ դիտորդի գրիչով կ'անդրադառնայ Օսմանեան Կայսրութեան մէջ Բողոքականութեան տարածուելուն եւ «Մայրենի Եկեղեցւոյ ծոցէն հեռացողներու» «առանձին ազգապետ մը ընտրելով առանձին հատում մը [(համայնք)] կազմելուն»:

Երբ «մի կողմէն Հռովմէական ազգայնոց խռովութիւններն ու կրօնական վեճերն կը յուզէին, միւս կողմէն եւս Բողոքական **Միսիոնարներն** (քարոզիչներն) կամաց-կամաց սկսած էին Տաճկաստանի մէջ դպրոցներ բանալ, Հայ մեծամեծաց հետ բարեկամանալ եւ քարոզելով՝ մտքերը պատրաստել նոր պառակտման համար: Մատթէոս Պատրիարքի ժամանակ, բողոքական քարոզողներն արդէն խմորած էին շատերու սրտերը: Մատթէոս Պատրիարքն սկսած էր արդէն կրօնական վիճաբանութիւններն բողոքական քարոզիչներու հետ, բայց սոյն վիճաբանութիւններն արդէն երկունք էին նոր պառակտման: Բողոքականութեան յաղթողներն վերերեւելու վրայ էին եւ Մատթէոսի բռնած բանադրական ընթացքը խիստ ձեռնտու եղաւ բողոքական քարոզիչներու նպատակին, վասնզի հալածել՝ կը նշանակէ տարածել: Եւ ահա՛, այսպէս, մի կողմէն բողոքական քարոզիչներու հետամտութիւնը, **միւս կողմէն Բողոքականութեան յարողներու թեթեւամտութիւնը** եւ միւս կողմէն Մատթէոս Պատրիարքի անխոհեմ ընթացքն պատճառ կը լինին եւ մեր եղբայրներէն մի մասն կը հեռանայ մայրենի Եկեղեցւոյ ծոցէն եւ Բողոքականութեան յարելով առանձին հատում կը կազմէ առանձին ազգապետ ընտրելով իւր համար»(7) (ընդգծումը մեր կողմէ, Ե.Հ.Բ.):

Դժբախտաբար շատ «թեթեւ» ձեռքով՝ «թեթեւամտութեամբ» մեղադրուած են «Բողոքականութեան

յարողները»: Թեթեւամիտ էին Հայոց Պատրիարքարանի կից հիմնադրուած Ուսումնարանի մեծանուն ուսուցչապետ, խորամիտ գիտնական, Հայ Եկեղեցիի բարեկարգութեան ջատագով, «Հայաստանի Էրագմուս» Գրիգոր Պատուելի Փէշտիմալճեանի ուսանողները, որոնք եղան առաջին յարողները Հայ Եկեղեցիի բարեկարգութիւնը պահանջող շարժումին, եւ ոչ թէ «Բողոքականութեան»: Ու զարմանալի, կրկին անտեսումը 1 Յուլիսի, 1846 թ. կազմաւորուած Հայաստանեայց Աւետարանական Եկեղեցիին: Պարզ չէ՞ որ նորակազմ եկեղեցիին անունը տարբեր բան կը յայտարարէ, ինչ որ «Բողոքականութիւն»ը ենթադրել կու տայ:

Արեւմտահայ Զարթօնքի կարկառուն դէմքերէն, ազգային երեսփոխան, ուսուցիչ, հրապարակագիր եւ իրաւաբան Հրանտ Ասատուր (1862 – 1928 թթ.) իր՝ «Կոստանդնուպոլսոյ Հայերը Եւ Իրենց Պատրիարքները» աշխատասիրութեան (1901 թ.) մէջ, հնարաւոր մանրամասնութեամբ կու տայ Պատրիարք-Պատրիարքարանի եւ Կ. Պոլսոյ հայերու յարաբերութիւնն ու պատմական դէպքերու զարգացումը, ու յատկապէս Մատթէոս Պատրիարք Զուխաճեանի գահակալութեան օրերուն՝ Պատրիարք-Պատրիարքարանի դիրքորոշումը Հայ Եկեղեցիի բարեկարգութիւնը պահանջող շարժումին հանդէպ, եւ այդ բոլորին հետեւանքները՝ բժախնդրութեամբ եւ անկողմնակալ ոգիով:

«... Մատթէոս Պատրիարք կը ջանայ նաեւ փակել տալ [միսիոնար Դոկտ. Սայրըս Համիլինի] Պէպէքի դպրոցը, բայց չի յաջողիր: 1846 Յունիս 9-ին բանադրանքի նոր [երրորդ] կոնդակ մը կը կարդացուի եկեղեցիներուն մէջ, Պատրիարքը կը յայտարարէ թէ ամէն տարի նոյն օրը պիտի կարդացուի այդ կոնդակը: Յունիսի(*) մէջ 40 Հայ-Բողոքականներ կը միանան եւ կը կազմեն «Կ. Պոլսոյ առաջին աւետարանական եկեղեցին», եւ հովիւ կ'ընտրեն Պ. Աբիսողոմ Տէր Խաչատուրեանը (կամ Իւթիւճեան), որ կը մեռնի 1847 Փետրուար 28-ին: Աբիսողոմի եղբայրը՝ պատուելի Սիմոն Իւթիւճեան, կը յաջորդէ անոր, ասոնց եղբայրն է նաեւ պատուելի Ստեփան Իւթիւճեան, **Քիւրակնի** արտօնատէրը, որ գրած է Բողոքականութեան Հայոց մէջ հաստատուելուն պատմութիւնը՝ **Քիւրակնի** մէջ: Վերջապէս 1847 Նոյեմբեր 3-ին(*), մինչ Սրբ. Սթրաթֆորտ Գաննինկ Անգլիա կը գտնուէր, եւ Լորտ Գօուլէյ առժամեայ կերպով յաջորդած էր անոր, Բողոքականները իբր անջատ հասարակութիւն ճանչցուեցան պաշտօնապէս»(8):

Եւ հոս հարցումը. Հրանտ Ասատուր որ ծանօթ է Պատուելի Ստեփան Իւթիւճեանի անունան, եւ գիտէ թէ ան **Քիւրակնի** արտօնատէրն է, ուր «գրած է Բողոքականութեան Հայոց մէջ հաստատուելուն պատմութիւնը», գիտալցաբար, թէ՛ անգգալաբար, սովորութեան կարգով կ'անտեսէ Իւթիւճեանի օգտագործած խորագիրը՝ «Ծագումն Եւ Ընթացք Աւետարանականութեան Ի Հայս», ու կը գրէ. «Բողոքականութեան Հայոց մէջ հաստատուելուն...»: Ծիշդ է. 1 Յուլիսի 1846 թ. Կ. Պոլսոյ մէջ կը կազմաւորուի «առաջին Աւետարանական Եկեղեցին», բայց Հրանտ Ասատուր ինչո՞ւ կ'անտեսէ իրողութիւնը, թէ՛ այդ «առաջին Աւետարանական եկեղեցին» **Հայ** Աւետարանական Եկեղեցի էր, ու կը կոչուէր **Հայաստանեայց Աւետարանական Եկեղեցի**: ■

Վերջ առաջին մասի: Երկրորդ մասը շարունակելի յաջորդ թիւով:

Տես ՄԱՏԵՆԱԳԻՏՈՒԹԻՒՆ-ը էջ 56-ի վրայ



Անցեալէն Այսօր՝ Բարեկարգութեան 175-ամեայ ճանապարհը

Վեր. Դոկտ. Յարութիւն Սելիմեան՝ Համայնքապետ Սուրիոյ Հայ Աւետարանական Համայնքի

Հայ Աւետարանական Եկեղեցիի հիմնադրութեան յիշատակումը պատեհ առիթ մըն է վերլուծելու անցեալի իրագործումները եւ արժեւորելու ներկան :

Արժէքները գնահատելն ու քննադատելը կը կազմէ ընկերութեան մը յառաջընթաց կորիզը, որ կը պահանջէ նորարար ըմբռնում եւ գիտակցութիւն:

Հայ Աւետարանական Եկեղեցին անցեալէն այսօր կը գործէ հաւատքովը նոր կեանքին, որ կը նորոգուի Քրիստոսով, կ'արդարանայ հաւատարմութեամբ եւ Աստուածաշունչի հեղինակութեամբ:

Այսօր, Հայաստանեայց Աւետարանական Եկեղեցիի 175-ամեակի յոբելիականին ուրախ եւ բարեբաւտիկ առիթին մէջ, հիմնական հարցումը, որ մեր ներկայ մտածումը, աշխատելաոճը եւ ռազմավարութիւնը կը կազմէ՝ կու գայ ըսելու թէ տակաւին առկա՞յ է բարեկարգութիւնը մեր կեանքին մէջ:

Տեսլականի տէր քառասուն անհատներու գծած շաւիղը այսօրուան ներկայ պայմաններուն եւ մարտահրաւերներուն որքանո՞վ յարիր է: Հարցադրում մը, որ մեզ կը հրաւիրէ խորհրդածութեան, միախմբուելու եւ համախոհութեան եզրեր գտնելու՝ դէպի մեր ժողովուրդը միացնող ազդակները:

Բարեկարգութիւնը եկաւ վանելու խաւարամտութիւնը, յետադիմական քաղաքականութիւնը, Աստուծոյ խօսքին նկատմամբ անտարբերութիւնը եւ կենցաղային այլախոհ արժէքներու առկայութիւնը: 175 տարի վերջ, այսօր, այս ազդակները բարեխառնուեցան նուիրական ծառայութեամբ եւ յառաջընթաց գործընթացով, սակայն թէ յիշուած բացթողումները տակաւին առկայ են համատարած հայութեան բազմաշերտ զանգուածներուն մէջ, ուրեմն բարեկարգութիւնը կը մնայ անհրաժեշտութիւն ու պահանջք: Ինչպիսի՞ բարեկարգութիւն եւ ներդրում պիտի բերէ եկեղեցին: Ո՞վ պիտի ըլլայ բարեկարգութիւնը նախաձեռնողը եւ որո՞նք պիտի բարեկարգուին:

Բարեկարգութիւնը ժամանակակից ըլլալու յարատեւ գործընթաց է կարելի չէ անտեսել ժամանակին պահանջները, որովհետեւ ժամանակը ամենագոր ոյժն է, որ կը սողցէ անհարկի եւ անտրամաբանական դիմադրութիւնները եւ հեղեղի նման կը քանդէ ու կը տապալէ ամէն ինչ որ արգելք կ'ըլլայ ժամանակի պահանջներու իրագործման Բարեկարգութեան ընթացքին համար ճայներ եւ կոչեր բարձրացնելու փոխարէն՝ դիմագրաւուած իրատեսական մարտահրաւերները լուսարձակի տակ առնելով, Հայ Աւետարանական Եկեղեցին կ'որդեգրէ ապագայի նկատմամբ տեսլական մը, միշտ իր կողքին ունենալով Ամերիկայի Հայ Աւետարանական Ընկերակցութիւնը, որ նեցուկ է անոր յառաջդիմութեան եւ վերելքին:

Եկեղեցին սոսկ կառոյց ու հովիւներ չէ, այլ ժողովուրդն է: Ծարունակաբար հայ ժողովուրդը բարեկարգութենէն անդին պէտք է առաջնորդել՝ դէպի վերանորոգում, որ աւելի համապարփակ գործընթաց մըն է:

Հոն ուր չկայ շարժում, չկայ նաեւ եղափոխութիւն, յառաջդիմութիւն, եւ հետեւաբար՝ կայ միայն քարացած մտայնութիւն, որ 21-րդ դարու մարտահրաւերներուն դիմաց չի կրնար որեւէ լուծում առաջարկել եւ դատապարտուած է ամլութեան:

Ուրեմն, ո՞վ պիտի բարեկարգէ այն եկեղեցին, որ հաւատաց բարեկարգութեան 1846 թուականէն սկսեալ:

Հայաստանեայց Աւետարանական Եկեղեցին կոչուած է հաւատարիմ մնալու իր արմատներուն, անցեալին, նախնիներու նուիրական կտակին: Այդ հաւատարմութիւնը գործնապէս իր թարգմանը կը գտնէ մեր Եկեղեցւոյ ու ազգի ծառայութեան դաշտէն ներս. վկայ՝ Հայ Աւետարանական Ծարժումի մեկնարկին կատարած յայտարարութիւնը:

Հետեւաբար, եկեղեցին կարիքը ունի երկու հիմնական առաջադրանքներու, որոնք պէտք է մեր մտածումներուն եւ մեր աշխատանքներուն մեկնակետը, հիմքը, հունաւորումը եւ նպատակը դառնան:

Առաջին՝ եկեղեցին կեանքի ոլորտներուն մէջ աշխարհի նկատմամբ անկախ եւ մաքուր խիղճ ունենալու հայեացքը աւելորդապաշտութիւն սեպող անհատները անգամ մը եւս հրաւիրէ բարեկարգուելու, վերադառնալով նախնական պարզութեան՝ եկեղեցին ժողովուրդին ամբողջական ծառայութեան մէջ դնելով: Եկեղեցին առաքելութիւն մըն է, որ պէտք է ուղղուի դէպի մեր ժողովուրդը, եւ Եկեղեցին մեր ժողովուրդին տանողը անոր սպասաւորներն են: Եկեղեցին՝ իբրեւ Քրիստոսի խորհրդական մարմինը, հարկ է տանիլ ժողովուրդին: Քրիստոս պիտի խօսի մեր Եկեղեցւոյ ճամբով՝ մեր ժողովուրդի կեանքին մէջ. մենք չէ որ պիտի խօսինք, այլ պիտի խօսեցնենք մեր կեանքի վարքագիծով, մեր խօսքով, մեր օրինակով, մեր ծառայութեամբ: Հայ Աւետարանական Եկեղեցիի բերած նպաստները հայ ժողովուրդի կեանքին՝ ընկերային, հոգեւոր, կրթական եւ այլ ոլորտներու մէջ, բացին դէպի ժողովուրդը ուղղուող շաւիղը, որուն շարունակականութիւնն ու մերօրեայ ժամանակներուն յարմարեցումը մեր գրաւականն ու հրամայականն է:

Երկրորդ՝ ինչպէ՞ս կարելի է Հայ Աւետարանական Եկեղեցին առնչել ներկայ աշխարհին: Ի՞նչ ազդու դեր պիտի ունենայ Հայ Աւետարանական Եկեղեցին սփիւռքի եւ հայրենի հողին վրայ, երբ հայ դպրոցը, հայ լեզուն, հայ հաւատքը, հայու հոգին, հայ երգը եւ շարք մը հայկական ինքնութեան

արժեքներ ամեն օր նահանջ կ'արձանագրեն: Ո՞վ պիտի պաշտպանե, վեր հանե եւ իր արժանի տեղը հասցնե՞ զանոնք: Հայ Աւետարանական Եկեղեցին ինչպե՞ս պիտի կարենայ ներթափանցել այս տիրող իրականություններուն մէջ եւ բարեկարգութիւն յառաջացնել:

Ո՞վ է բարեկարգուողը եւ ի՞նչ պայմաններ կը դիմագրաւէ: Այս առնչութեամբ բարեկարգուողը ենթակայ է համաշխարհայնացման յորձանուտին մէջ կորսուելու: Իսկ համաշխարհայնացումը ի՞նչ է եւ ի՞նչ դեր ունի.սահմանները քանդուած են այսօր, մենք կ'ապրինք նոյն աշխարհին մէջ, շրջապատուած ենք տարբեր մշակոյթներով, տարբեր մտածողութիւններով. այս է համաշխարհայնացումը:

Բարեկարգուողը մեր համատարած հայկական իրականութիւնն է, որ համաշխարհայնացումի ալիքին դէմ թիավարելով՝ ազգային, կրօնական, մշակութային եւ աշխարհագրական սահմանները անցնելով, նոր նկրտումներ ձեռք կը բերէ:

Եկեղեցիին ներգրաւուածութիւնը այս ոլորտներուն մէջ կը նպաստէ հոգեւոր վերականգնումի, աճի եւ յառաջընթացի: Կրթական հաստատութիւնները եւս իրենց ներդրումը կը բերեն հոգեմտաւոր աճին:

Վերոնշեալները մտահոգութիւններ են, որոնք պէտք է մղեն մեզ մտածելու եւ գործելու այնպէս մը, որ մեր Եկեղեցին այսօր միայն անկիւն մը մնացած աղօթավայր մը չդառնայ մեր ժողովուրդին զաւակներուն համար, այլ իրապէս վերածուի մեր ժողովուրդը կենսանորոգող, հոգեմտաւոր արժեքներով պայծառացնող եւ հարստացնող հաւատքի առաքելութիւն:

Հարկ է քայլ պահել 21-րդ դարու փոփոխութիւններուն հետ՝ հիմնուելով Աստուածշունչին եւ մեր եկեղեցւոյ հայրերու ուսուցումներուն ու արժեքներուն վրայ, հայ եկեղեցւոյ Աստուածաբանութիւնը դարձնելով ներկայ դարուս աւելի համահունչ:

Հայ Աւետարանական Եկեղեցին հրաւիրուած է այս հիմնախնդիրներուն դուռը թակելու, քննելու եւ լուծումներ առաջադրելու՝ բարեկարգութեան էականութիւնը արդար իրաւունք սեպելով: Բարեկարգումը պիտի օգնէ որ հաւատարմութեան որակի բարձրացումը աղերս ունենայ մեր ազգային ու հոգեւոր դաստիարակութեան կորիզային բովանդակութեան հետ: Եթէ խօսքը կը վերաբերի հայ լեզուի եւ հաւատքի անտարբերութեան, ասոնք պէտք է մեր ռազմավարութեան մէջ մտնեն, որպէսզի սերունդներ դաստիարակուին անտարբերութեան ախտի հեռացման նիւթով եւ զարկ տան պատկանելիութեան դրսեւորումին:

Եկեղեցին բարեկարգութեան ուղին ինքզինքին վերապահելով եւ համապատասխան քայլերու նախաձեռնելով նշոյլներ պիտի արձակէ եւ բարեկարգութեան մեկնարկը յայտարարէ, ինչպէս 175 տարի առաջ, նոյնպէս այսօր՝ հայ մարդու մտածողութեան եւ աշխարհայեացքին մէջ:

Աւետարանական շարժումին հոգեւոր-կրօնական շարժում մը ըլլալը պէտք չէ բաւարար սեպենք, այլ պէտք է իմանանք խոր համոզումով որ առիկա արդիւնք է հոգեւոր վերագարթումի: Առիկա իսկական յարաբերութեան արտացոլում մըն է Աստուծոյ եւ մարդոց միջեւ:

175 տարի առաջ, այս էր որ կը պատահէր հայ իրականութեան մէջ: Տարիներու թաւալումը բարեկարգութեան բերած խորքէն ոչ մէկ բան կորսնցուց: Այդ խորքը կը վայելէ նոյն հեղինակութիւնն ու կարեւորութիւնը:


Հակառակ Հայ Աւետարանական եկեղեցիին տարածումին եւ ընդլայնումին, մեր հիմնակէտը կը մնայ Աւետարանի

տարածումը, հայ անհատի հոգեմտաւոր զարթոնումը եւ հայ ժողովուրդի բարօրութիւնը:

Հայաստանեայց Աւետարանական Եկեղեցին շատագոյն ու ռաւիվիրան է բարեկարգութեան՝ ստանձնելով իրեն վստահուած առաքելութիւնը, գլխաւոր նպատակ ունենալով բարոյական արժեքներէ պարպուած աշխարհի մէջ կորուսեալ արժեքները վերականգնել եւ շարունակել գործել ի խնդիր ընկերային, եկեղեցական հասարակական ու ազգային գործունէութեան ծաւալումի:

Ապրելու եւ գործելու ենք որպէս եկեղեցւոյ մշակը, որ ինքնին կը յուշէ յարատեւ բարեկարգութեան մը ընթացքը:

Բարեկարգումը կը պահանջէ հետեւողական աշխատանք ու լայնամիտ մասնակցութիւն, հեռու կարծրատիպ մօտեցումներէ:

Ծնորհաւոր տօնդ Հայաստանեայց Աւետարանական Եկեղեցի, անխախտ հաւատքով դէպի նորանոր ամենակներ: 

Ճարուևակութիւն էջ 54-էն...

ՄԱՏԵՆԱԳԻՏՈՒԹԻՒՆ

1 – Առաջինը՝ Մեծ Վեգիր Ռէշիտ Փաշայի հրամանագիրն է, ստորագրուած 15 Նոյեմբերի, 1847 թ., ուղղուած քաղաքի (Կ. Պոլիս) եկամուտներու հաշուեքննիչ փաշային: Երկրորդը՝ Սուլթան Ապտուլ Մեհմետի կայսերական հրովարտակն է, ստորագրուած 15 Նոյեմբերի, 1850 թ., ուղղուած՝ Մեհմետ Փաշա վեզիրին, իսկ երրորդը՝ Սուլթան Ապտուլ Մեհմետի կայսերական երկրորդ հրամանագիրն է, ստորագրուած 1853 թ. Մայիսի վերջերուն, ուղղուած Բողոքեթսթան Համայնքի Ազգապետ Ստեփան Սերոբեանի (տես՝ Երուանդ Հ. Քասունի, **Քննական Տեսութիւն Հայ Աւետարանականութեան Պարմութիւնը Օղակահիստդ Դէմքերու եւ Եղելութիւններու (1828 - 1922 թթ.)**, Պէյրուս, 2009, էջ 532-535, 537-538:

2 – Աւետիս Պէրպէրեան, **Պարմութիւն Հայոց**, Կ. Պոլիս, 1871, էջ 307:

3 – Հ. Վարդան Վ. Ըստկարեան, **Եկեղեցական Պարմութիւն Հանդերձ Ազգային Եկեղեցական Պարմութեամբ**, Վիեննա, 1872, էջ 354: Դժբախտաբար, պատմաբան Հայր Սահակ Տէր-Մովսէսեան, առանց իսկ ճշդելու աղբիւրը եւ կշռադատելու մէջբերած խօսքին իրաւ տարողութիւնը, իր նախորդներուն ազդեցութեան տակ, կ'արձանագրէ. «Բան մը չափազանցուած չէ, երբ ըսուած է թէ “Բողոքականութիւնը բուն դրած էր Տաճկահայոց մէջ աւելի անկյո-սաքսոնեան ոսկիներու եւ ձրի գրքերու բաշխման ուժով՝ քան ներքին համոզման յամառութեամբ”» (Հ. Սահակ Տէր-Մովսէսեան, **Պարմութիւն Հայոց**, մասն Բ., Վենետիկ, Ս. Ղազար, 1923, էջ 728):

4 – Հրանտ Ասատուր, **Կ. Պոլսոյ Հայերը եւ Իրենց Պարրիարքները**, «1901 Ընդարձակ Օրացոյց Ազգ. Հիանդանոցի», էջ 218-219:

5 – Նոյնը, էջ 219, ծան. 1:

6 – Առաջինը՝ Վրթանէս Քնյ. Եզնակեանը բանադրող, 12 Յունուարի, 1846 թ., երկրորդը՝ ութ օր ետք, որ «կը բանադրէր Բողոքականութիւնը ընդունող բոլոր հայերը, եւ երրորդը՝ 9 Յունիսի, 1846 թ. կը կարդացուի եկեղեցիներուն մէջ. «Պատրիարքը կը յայտարարէ թէ ամէն տարի նոյն օրը պիտի կարդացուի այդ կոնդակը» (նոյնը, էջ 219-220):

7 – Մ. Վարդապետ Մուրատեանց, **Պարմութիւն Հայաստանեայց Առաքելական Սուրբ Եկեղեցւոյ**, Երուսաղէմ, 1872, էջ 605-606:

8 – Հրանտ Ասատուր, **Կ. Պոլսոյ Հայերը...**, էջ 220-221: Աստղանիշ կրող թուականները հին տոմարով են, որոնց պէտք է գումարուի 12 կամ 13 օր:

Joseph Zeronian, Ed.D. (Former AMAA President)

August 23, 1936 - May 10, 2022

Joseph Paul Zeronian, Ed.D., former President of the Armenian Missionary Association of America, passed away at his home in Pasadena, CA on May 10, 2022. Born in Santa Monica, CA on August 23, 1936 to Mary (Ohanian) and Hovsep Zeronian, he had an idyllic childhood in Venice, CA surrounded by an extended family of grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins and his adored older sister, Mary Ann.

Faith, family, friends, service and leadership defines Joe's life in the Armenian and local Pasadena communities. Dedicating his career to education, he transitioned from teaching to administration, ultimately serving as CFO of the Los Angeles Unified School District. Whether serving or leading, Joe remained a gentle man, honorable and kind.

Joe is survived by his sister, Mary Ann Malconian, his wife of 62 years Marilyn, son Gregory Zeronian (Laura), daughter Ruth Edwards (Richard White), grandchildren Max Zeronian, Amy Zeronian Davidson (Andrew), Natalie Edwards, and Joseph Edwards, nieces, nephews, grandnieces and grandnephews, and a large extended family.

A Celebration of Life was held on June 3 at the United Armenian Congregational Church of Los Angeles, CA.

The following is an excerpt from the UACC Herald (July/August 2017).



FIRST GENERATION ARMENIAN AMERICANS

By Dr. Joseph Zeronian

Growing up I always knew I was Armenian and therefore different from almost everyone else. I mean different, not in a negative way, for I was never aware that I was treated differently from or put upon by others. I participated in all the activities and sports in school, had many friends at school and was a good student. But nevertheless different.

My most formative years of growing were when I was born in Santa Monica, CA to when I graduated from college and entered the U.S. Navy in 1958. During those years, there were many influences in my life, but the most important were those imparted to me by my family.

There were four parts of the family that most influenced my growing up Armenian: my parents and sister at home, obviously; my mother's side of the family, my grandmother, aunts and an uncle; and my father's side—his sister and brother-in-law, Altoun and Reverend Bedros Garabedian of California, and their extended family. Finally, and not until I graduated from high school, did I meet another part of the family—my father's brother, Garabed Zeron and his family.

My home gave me love, directed my faith, and established my value system, my grandmother's home showed me something of the Armenian community around us, my aunt's farmhouse showed me what "old country" life might have been like, and the New York Zerons showed me what big city sophistication looked like.

My father, Hovsep, was born in the old country—in a place called Kharpert. Later in life, I came to know that his true birthplace was a village near Kharpert called Perchanj, and still later I had the chance to visit the place where he had grown up. My mother, Mary, was born in Philadelphia, the daughter of Garabed Ohanian, a man who had come from Kharpert to America in 1888, and a young girl Aghavny, my grandmother, who was orphaned in Arapkir in 1895 and raised in a Catholic orphanage in the Constantinople area—only seventeen when my mother was born. I knew only parts of their stories, but growing up, I started to fill in many of the blanks.

Of my four grandparents, I only knew my mother's mother. Grandfather Ohanian died when I was six-months old, and my Zeronian grandparents both died in the old country. The stories of their remarkable lives have, in turn, shaped the story of mine.

At home, we lived our lives like so many around us. Until my dad retired, the weeks were taken up with work, school and church. My father always wanted us to live close to our school so that we could safely walk there each day.

As with all good parents, lessons are caught as well as taught. My mother, as with so many Armenians of that generation, was mindful of thrift, cleanliness, and doing the necessary things in life as well as you can. Honesty was stressed by my father as the most important quality in life, after a quiet and deep faith in Jesus Christ. His artistry with wood inlay and with cabinetry was not surpassed, and my son, Greg, and my nephew, Mark, have the same skill set.

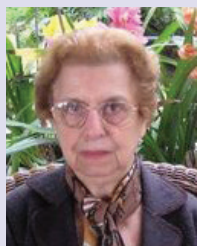
My sister Mary Ann had a very significant impact on my life. Being six years older than me she advised me, helped me dress well and always stressed the importance of a good vocabulary.

Much of my life during this period centered around the Gethsemane Armenian Congregational Church. My experience beginning in 1941 at Gethsemane, with the direction given to me from so many wonderful leaders, was a very significant factor in my maturing. It is where I met my future wife, Marilyn, and established close, life-long friendships.

These are some of my experiences growing up Armenian in southern California. Family members made the biggest impact on my maturing to adulthood, and it occurs to me that I have been blessed with interesting and entertaining relatives. While every day was not necessarily harmonious, and while there was much to learn about life from others around me and in the years ahead, my experiences growing up Armenian established in me a value system and a world view that I carry with me to this day.

Araxy Adalian

Araxy Adalian of Los Angeles, CA, beloved mother, grandmother, sister, aunt, relative and friend, passed away July 1, 2022. She was 94.



Araxy was born in Alexandretta on January 30, 1928, the second of three children born to the late Hapet and Helen Der Boghossian.

She is survived by her children Rouben Adalian and his wife Alice and their children, Dvin and Diran; Lena Sarkissian and her husband Kourken (Greg) and their children Talar, Haig and Alex; and Robert Adalian and his wife Maral and their children Andrew and Alexa; sister Shake Kevorkian and her children Gregory and Vivian, and her brother's (late Hagop Der Boghossian) children Helen and Chris.

Funeral services, followed by interment, were held on July 19 at the Hollywood Hills Forest Lawn Mortuary Park, Old North Church, Los Angeles, CA.

Memorial donations can be made to the Armenian Missionary Association of America to support Haigazian University Academic Publications Fund. 🇺🇸

Yeremia Chaderjian

Yeremia Chaderjian was born in 1931 in Beirut, Lebanon to Boghos and Flor Chaderjian. He was the youngest of five children and the last to survive.



He met and married the love of his life, Marie Jeanne Sarafian, and they welcomed three daughters, Caroline, Houry and Tamar. Before the civil war escalated, he made all efforts to escape Beirut. After a long career as a highly regarded publisher in Beirut, he transitioned his career in Fresno, CA in the area of agriculture. Yeremia passed away on May 10, 2022 in Fresno, CA. He is survived by his wife, daughters and their families, which included 5 grandchildren who were the lights of his life. Memorial donations can be made in Yeremia's name to the Lebanon Disaster/Urgent Relief Fund through the AMAA.

The following is an excerpt of the eulogy written by his daughter Tamar Bogosian.

Our father's memory is indeed blessed because he walked in righteousness his entire life. He and our mother never ceased to instill virtue, integrity, honor, and the love of God into our lives. My sisters and I knew there was no mountain high enough, no valley low enough, and no river wide enough for what our father would do for his family and friends. Our father was this example even though he lost his own father at a very young age. Just one week ago, he shared the story of his childhood and how, as the youngest of 5 children, he embraced his call to be strong for his mother, brother and sisters and endure and thrive amid adversity and challenges in Lebanon. His strength at a young age set the stage for what was to become a growing and enduring devotion and dedication to create a loving, nurturing and prosperous life for his own family.

There was no question when he met his wife, Marie Jeanne Sarafian, that he would do whatever it took to make her his wife. For 62 years he honored, respected, admired and supported our mother to fulfill her dreams of continuing her nursing career. Our mother was by his side during the last moments of his life, and I am convinced that their love was at its strongest point before he left this earth.

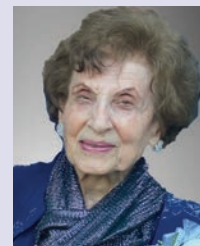
Through the worst of times and the best of times, he never lost his drive to provide every possible opportunity for his daughters to succeed and excel in our academic careers. Education was a top priority for our dad. Although he was unable to further his own education, he self-motivated by reading numerous Armenian periodicals, watching documentaries, and educating himself on important historical and political matters involving the Armenian Diaspora.

The last several years of our father's life remained full as he was surrounded by the love of his wife, immediate family and dedicated and devoted friends. He never forgot his love for Christ and in the last moments of his life we watched as our father praised God by singing Armenian hymns and prayers that he knew so well from his service in the Armenian Apostolic Church. All from his hospital bed.

Although this world lost a man of honor, integrity, grace, dignity, and quiet courage in the face of adversity, heaven gained his beautiful soul. 🇺🇸

Merzia Cronin

Merzia (Getzoian) Cronin of Belmont, MA passed away on May 19, 2022 with her children by her side.



Born in Beirut, Lebanon, she was the daughter of Avedis and Zaroohy (Yesegeelian) Getzoian.

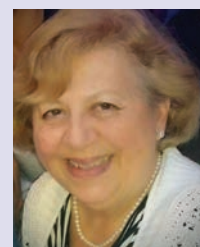
Merzia came to the United States in 1955 to teach at the Beverly School for the Deaf, Beverly, MA. She received her bachelor's and master's degrees from UMass Boston (formerly Boston State College). She was a retired Belmont High School Foreign language teacher.

Merzia was the beloved wife of the late Richard A. Cronin. Devoted mother of Arlene Najarian and her husband Gary, Richard A. Cronin Jr. and his wife Maureen, and Suzanne Cronin. Cherished grandmother of Angela M. Breault and her husband Donald, Jack R., and Christopher J. Najarian, Richard A., Daniel J., and William J. Cronin. Loving sister of the late Sarkis, and Habib Getzoian, Naomi Topalian and Paroohy Jacobsen. Also survived by many loving nieces, nephews and dear friends.

Funeral services were held at the First Armenian Church in Belmont on May 25 with burial at Highland Meadow Cemetery in Belmont. Memorial gifts may be made to First Armenian Church, Armenian Missionary Association of America, or Shriners Children's Hospital. 🇺🇸

Angel Artaryan Eglenceyan

Angel Artaryan Eglenceyan of Montreal, QC, Canada left this world on May 15, 2022, with the joy of being united with her beloved Savior and the hope of eternal life after suffering a relentless illness for three years. She was 79.



Angel was born in Istanbul, Turkey on December 25, 1942, the youngest of two children. The Church, where her parents Hagop and Shaké Artarian had an active role, was instrumental in her Christian upbringing and where she was taught about the love of God from her mother.

Angel received her primary education at Injirbidir Armenian Evangelical School

and higher education at Yessayan Girls' High School. At the same time, she took piano and solfege courses. After graduating from high school, she followed a linguistic and artistic course at college and entered the teaching field at Makrouhian and Mkhitarian Primary schools.

In 1965, she married Mardiros Eglenceyan and together they built their modest home in Beirut, Lebanon, where she followed a series of Christian Education courses at Haigazian College and the Near East School of Theology, where Mardiros was already studying.

In 1967, they returned to their birthplace, and she became a Sunday School teacher at the Armenian Evangelical Church of Pera in Istanbul, where her husband was in pastoral service. Being a lover of children, she gathered the children, both in the church and in their home, as well as in the Summer Center of Camp Armen, where many young souls enjoyed the love of God and the grace of the Savior, both through Christian education and the music of spiritual songs. During this period, God blessed them with two children, Ari and Maral.

In 1975, the unstable political conditions in Turkey forced them to immigrate to Canada where they attended and became members of the Armenian Evangelical Church in Montreal. After a few years, Angel started working as a secretary in their private business for 25 years.

Along with her livelihood and family responsibilities, Angel lovingly served the Montreal church for many years as organist and pianist for 20 years, as chairlady of the Ladies' Society, conducting choir and singing, taking charge of the Sunday School, and speaking at Women's Conferences on various occasions.

Angel was a modest wife and partner to her husband and a loving and caring mother to her children and five lovely grandchildren. She loved rules and regulations, cooking delicious food and pastries, taking care of flowers, playing classical music, and reading the Holy Scriptures and spiritual literature. She was a woman of faith, a person who greeted others with a smiling face and communicated with everyone in the church, especially being interested in the newcomers and looking out for the elderly. In 2016, she was chosen Mother of the Year in the Church. Blessed be her sweet and precious memory.

Angel is survived by her loving husband Mardiros, his son's family: Ari, Dalita, Jacob-

Hagop, Benjamin, and Zachary, daughter's family: Maral, Patrick, Lutfik and Lux, sister Arpine Chaker and many extended family members.

A funeral service was held at the Armenian Evangelical Church of Montreal on May 21. 🇷🇺

Charles Jim Esralian

Charles (Chuck) Jim Esralian, of McKinney, TX, passed away on January 17, 2022. He was 97. Charles was born on November 23, 1924 in New York City, NY to Harry Israelian (later changed to Esralian) and Mary (Tatigian) Esralian. His parents came to the USA in 1922 by way of a Greek Steamship to escape the Armenian Genocide. Charles was a resident of McKinney, TX since 1975 and worked as a Committee Man for General Motors (GMC) for thirty years. He served in WWII in the US Army and was a member of the Chambersville Methodist Church.



Charles was married to Sarah Whit Esralian (Loftice) for 59 years. They were married July 12, 1945 in McKinney, TX. They met during WWII in 1943 at an Army Hospital in McKinney. Chuck and Sarah lived in Pontiac, MI for thirty years, during which time they had three sons, Charles Whit Esralian, Michael Jim Esralian, and Gary Paul Esralian.

In his retirement years, Chuck and Sarah moved to Texas in 1975 and became ardent gardeners. After Sarah passed in 2004 Chuck returned to his hobby of playing the drums and enjoyed playing in a country western band called "Mary & The Good Ol' Boys." He was a member of the band for many years and played until the age of 95. They played for several retirement centers and establishments in the North Texas area. Chuck had a kind heart for such facilities, and they usually played for free or for a minimal fee.

Chuck is survived by two sons, Michael Jim Esralian and wife, Shirley Charlene Esralian of Aloha, OR and Gary Paul Esralian of McKinney, TX; daughter-in-law, Charlene Joyce Esralian of Clarkston, MI; three grandchildren, Carol Ann Esralian, Sarah Frances Esralian, and John Whit Esralian; three great-grandchildren, Alec Whit Esralian, Emily Ruth Esralian, and Linsie Joyce Esralian.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Sarah Whit Esralian on August 10, 2004 and his oldest son, Charles Whit Esralian on November 5, 2021. 🇷🇺

Michael Alan Gogjian, M.D.

Michael Alan Gogjian, M.D., a lifelong resident of Methuen, MA passed away suddenly on July 29, 2022. He was 71.



Dr. Gogjian attended Central Catholic High School, Class of 1969 and later graduated from Merrimack College magna cum laude in 1973 with a BA in Biology. He continued his education graduating from Tufts University Graduate School of Arts and Sciences in 1975 with an MS in Physiology and graduating Tufts Medical School in 1979. He subsequently did his Residency at New England Deaconess Hospital in Boston, and after completion of his Fellowship at Harvard University in 1982, opened his private practice in North Andover, where he cared for thousands of patients during a career spanning four decades.

Dr. Gogjian was an integral part and highly regarded member of the Merrimack Valley medical community. Affectionately referred to by his colleagues as "the doctors' doc," he was a brilliant clinician and beloved physician, who was committed to the health and wellness of his patients and well respected among his colleagues and his Armenian church community. He served for many years on the Lawrence General Hospital Executive Committee, where he was recognized for his 17 years of dedicated service as Medical Staff Treasurer in 2010. In his spare time, of which there was always too little, Dr. Gogjian enjoyed most his family gatherings during the holidays, church outings, summers at Seabrook Beach, classic TV trivia, and an occasional round of golf. He brought joy to all who knew him with his unique personality, extraordinarily kind demeanor, and of course, his love of the Three Stooges. Dr. Gogjian was a compassionate and selfless man who devoted his life and love to family, friends, and patients alike.

Dr. Gogjian was predeceased by his parents Michael and Marguerite Aznoian Gogjian. He is survived by his loving sister Melanie Gogjian, adoring aunt Alyce Aznoian, and several cousins, nieces, and nephews.

At the request of Dr. Gogjian and his family the burial was private. A memorial service for family and loved ones will be held at a later date. Donations in Dr. Gogjian's memory may be made to AMAA for Armenian Children's Milk Fund, Armenia Tree Project or Saints Vartanantz Church of Chelmsford, MA. 🇷🇺

Araxie Jeanbart

Araxie Apelian Jeanbart of Reseda, CA passed peacefully to be with the Lord on June 9, 2022, surrounded by her four children. She was 88.



Araxie was born in Aleppo, Syria on June 24, 1934, to Nofer and Veronica Apelian, both survivors of the Armenian Genocide. She was the eldest of six siblings: Hratch, Hasmig, Ashod, Hripsime, and George. She attended Aleppo College Middle and High School, where she worked as an Accountant and Office Manager after graduating. She met her husband, Mounir Jeanbart, at Aleppo College where he taught Physics and Mathematics. They were married in August 1967 and had four children: Pauline, Christine, Caroline, and Andre.

In 1986, Araxie moved with her family to the United States and worked as an Office Manager at C & E Merdianian Armenian Evangelical School in Sherman Oaks, CA. She was the founder and Chairperson of the Aleppo College Alumni Association in Los Angeles, where she helped raise funds to provide scholarships to Armenian students in Aleppo, Syria.

In 1993, Araxie lost her husband to cancer. Before retiring, she worked at the United Armenian Congregational Church for a short period of time as an Office Assistant. Araxie devoted her retirement years to spending time and taking care of her grandchildren: Greg Silah, Seant and Nicole Ryan, Nicholas and Marc Bullock,

and Anthony and Troy Jeanbart. During her last ten years, she developed Alzheimer's and Leukemia.

Funeral services were held June 30 at Forest Lawn Cemetery, Los Angeles, CA. 🇺🇸

Maida Shnorhokian

Maida Shnorhokian of Issy-les-Moulineaux, France made her transition from this world to the eternal to be with her Lord on July 22, 2022, at the dawn of her 92nd birthday.



Maida was born in 1930 to the Bezirgian family in Beirut, Lebanon. In 1947, she married Albert Shnorhokian, a dedicated follower of Jesus Christ, and they were blessed with four children: Samuel, Ruth, Hovel, and Daniel.

Maida was the virtuous woman described in Proverbs 31. She was wise, a good cook, a seamstress, musical and a woman of discipline. Her nephew Harout Nercessian wrote about her "My Aunt Maida was the backbone of my Uncle Albert, and their home was a safe haven to us, where we found physical and spiritual nourishment."

The civil war that started in 1975 caused many trials and tribulations. The family had financial loss, and their two older sons immigrated to Paris, and the worst was, losing their youngest son Daniel, killed at the age of 18, a casualty of war. Maida and

Albert trusted God and obeyed Him by even forgiving the killer.

Six years after Daniel's death, Albert died of a heart attack, leaving Maida all alone in their unsafe apartment in West Beirut, Lebanon. Maida's son Hovel took her to his home in Paris. She was tired physically, but through all the trials she had matured spiritually.

After three years, she regained her strength, and moved to a flat next to the Armenian Evangelical Church in Issy-les-Moulineaux. For the next 30 years, she served the Lord and God's people in every way she could. She taught Armenian, translated articles, shared God's Word and the different miracles God performed in her life through the telephone ministry, télé Bible, and in ladies' house group. Her home was open to all for meals and lodging.

Her son Sam took good care of her in her last years when she needed help.

Maida's principle in life was to seek God's will, obey and trust Him, and in everything give thanks. The verse she often repeated the last few months was "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass." Psalm 37:5

She fervently prayed daily for the salvation of the precious souls who still are not following the Lord and believed that God will save them even after her death.

A funeral service and celebration of Maida's life was held July 28 at the Armenian Evangelical Church of Issy-les-Moulineaux officiated by the Pastor of the Church Rev. Joël Mikaélian, followed by interment at the Intercommunal Cemetery of Clamart. 🇺🇸

Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on. "Yes," says the Spirit, "they will rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them." Revelation 14:13

The AMAA Board of Directors and staff wish to extend their heartfelt condolences to the families of the following deceased friends.

Jessy Hagopian – Waltham, MA

Sirvart Hintlian – Pasadena, CA

*** Rose Injejikian – Granada Hills, CA**

Lydia Khounagian – Alexandria, Egypt

Armen Manasar – Wappingers Falls NY

Hampartsum Momdjian – São Paulo, Brazil

David Mugar – Boston, MA

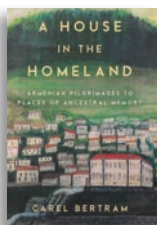
** Memorials designated for AMAA*



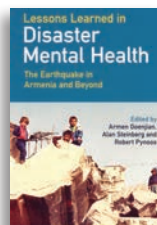
AMAA Bookstore - Featured Books



Armenian English Diglot New Testament
Western Armenian and Today's English version.
Item # 508 - Price: \$15.00



A House in the Homeland: Armenian Pilgrimages to Places of Ancestral Memory
By Carel Bertram
A powerful examination of soulful journeys made to recover memory and recuperate stolen pasts in the face of unspeakable histories.
Item # 415 - Price: \$25.00



Lessons Learned in Disaster Mental Health - The Earthquake in Armenia and Beyond
A comprehensive overview of the extensive post-disaster mental health recovery program implemented after the 1988 Armenian earthquake.
Edited By Armen Goenjian, Alan Steinberg and Robert Pynoos
Item # 402 - Price: \$25.00
All Proceeds go to AMAA



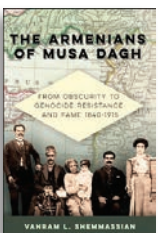
A Century of Armenian Protestantism 1846-1946
(Second Printing)
The author recounts the history of the Armenian Evangelical movement from its beginning to 1946.
By Leon Arpee
Item # 365 - Price: \$15.00



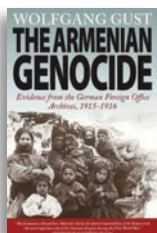
A History of Armenian Christianity (Second Printing)
A fairly objective overview of the Christian pilgrimage of the Armenian people throughout the centuries.
By Leon Arpee
Item # 366 - Price: \$25.00



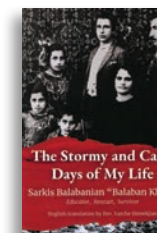
The Genesis and Early Development of the Armenian Missionary Association of America
History of the founding of the AMAA.
By Rev. Dr. Vahan H. Tootikian
Item # 403 - Price: \$20.00



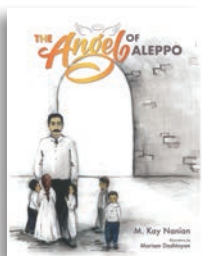
The Armenians of Musa Dagh: From Obscurity to Genocide Resistance and Fame 1840-1915
By Vahram Shemmassian, Ph.D.
Item # 408 (paper back) - Price: \$30.00



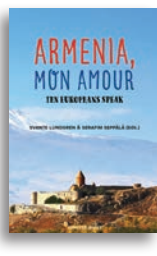
The Armenian Genocide
Evidence from the German Foreign Office Archives, 1915-1916.
Compiled and edited by Wolfgang Gust
Item # 349 - Price: \$75.00



The Stormy and Calm Days of My Life
Educator, Rescuer, Survivor.
Sarkis Balabanian (Balaban Khoja) Translated by Rev. Vatche Ekmekjian
Item # 406 - Price: \$20.00
All Proceeds go to AMAA Balabanian Ed. Fund



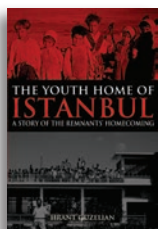
Angel of Aleppo
The story of Reverend Hovhannes Eskijian, who risked his life to save children in Aleppo, Syria during the Armenian Genocide of 1915. By M. Kay Nanian
Illustrations by Mariam Dashtoyan
Item # 410 - Price: \$10.00



Armenia Mon Amour
Ten non-Armenian friends of Armenia describe their love for this country.
By Svante Lundgren & Serafim Seppälä (Eds.)
Item # 409 - Price: \$30.00



Յուշամատեն Դպաստանեայց Աւետարանական Եկեղեցւոյ – Memoirs of the Armenian Evangelical Church (In Armenian)
Կազմաւորուում եւ խմբագրութիւն՝ Վեր. Դոկտ. Վահան Յ. Թութիկեան
Compiled and Edited by Rev. Dr. Vahan H. Tootikian
Item # 412 - Price: \$20.00



The Youth Home of Istanbul: A Story of the Remnants' Homecoming.
By Hrant Guzelian
Item # 357 - Price: \$20.00



The Recipes of Musa Dagh
An Armenian Cookbook in a Dialect of its Own.
By Alberta, Anna and Louisa Magzanian
Item # 364CO - Price: \$19.50

Scan here to visit the bookstore and order your books



For a complete listing of our Bookstore items and for orders, please visit www.amaa.org/bookstore or contact AMAA Bookstore: 201.265.2607

Official Call

to the 103rd Annual Meeting of the Armenian Missionary Association of America

October 22, 2022

**Armenian Presbyterian Church
Paramus, NJ**

The 103rd Annual Meeting of the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) will be held on Saturday, October 22, 2022 at 9:00 a.m. (PT) at the Armenian Presbyterian Church, 140 Forest Avenue, Paramus, NJ 07652. All members of the AMAA are invited to attend the Meeting to:

1. Consider and approve the reports of the Officers, Committees, Chapters and Affiliated Boards of the Association for the fiscal year 2021-2022;
2. Review the financial reports for the fiscal year 2021-2022;
3. Announce the names of the newly elected Board members;
4. Elect members to the Nominating Committee;
5. Elect an Auditor; and
6. Consider and address any other business that may come before the membership.

Scan here →
to make your reservation



Thursday, October 20 - AMAA Headquarters, Paramus, NJ

- 6:00pm Dinner
- 7:00pm AEWC Meeting

Friday, October 21 - AMAA Headquarters, Paramus, NJ

- 9:30am Armenian Evangelical World Council Meeting
- 12:00pm Lunch
- 6:00pm Dinner
- 7:00pm AMAA Board of Directors' Meeting

Saturday, October 22 - Armenian Presbyterian Church, Paramus, NJ

- 9:00am 103rd AMAA Annual Meeting
- 12:30pm Lunch
- 1:30pm AMAA Board Meeting (Short Session)

Saturday, October 22 - Hilton Hasbrouck Heights/Meadowlands Hotel, Hasbrouck Heights, NJ

- 6:00pm Reception
- 7:00pm Banquet

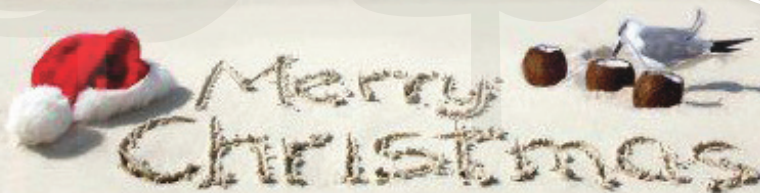
Sunday, October 23 - Armenian Presbyterian Church, Paramus, NJ

- 11:00am Worship Service and Installation of AMAA Officers
- 12:00pm Light Lunch

THE ARMENIAN MISSIONARY ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

invites you...

to bring
CHRISTMAS JOY
to our Children in
ARMENIA & ARTSAKH



Even though the Christmas season is still months away, the AMAA has already begun preparations to bring 'Christmas Joy' to children in Armenia and Artsakh!

AMAA's Christmas Joy Program brings smiles and fun celebrations to thousands of needy children throughout Armenia and Artsakh. From music and dancing, to Christmas plays and narrations, the true message of Christmas is proclaimed. Your donation of a Christmas Joy package is delivered directly into the hands of the children who are delighted with their gift. The packages are filled with a variety of toys, school supplies, personal care items, candy and a Christmas story activity booklet and crayons. For some children, this special package given by the AMAA may be the only Christmas gift they receive, as their families cannot afford to spend what little income they have on presents.

For as little as \$15 per package make Christmas a summer affair and be a part of sharing God's love and help bring Christmas Joy to our precious children in the Homeland!



**Join us and be a part of sharing God's love
and bring Christmas Joy to our precious children in Armenia and Artsakh!**

Enclosed is my donation.

Select one: ☐ \$15 ☐ \$30 ☐ \$45 ☐ \$75 ☐ \$125 ☐ Other \$ _____



Scan and
donate now!

Name: _____

Address: _____

Tel.: _____ E-mail: _____

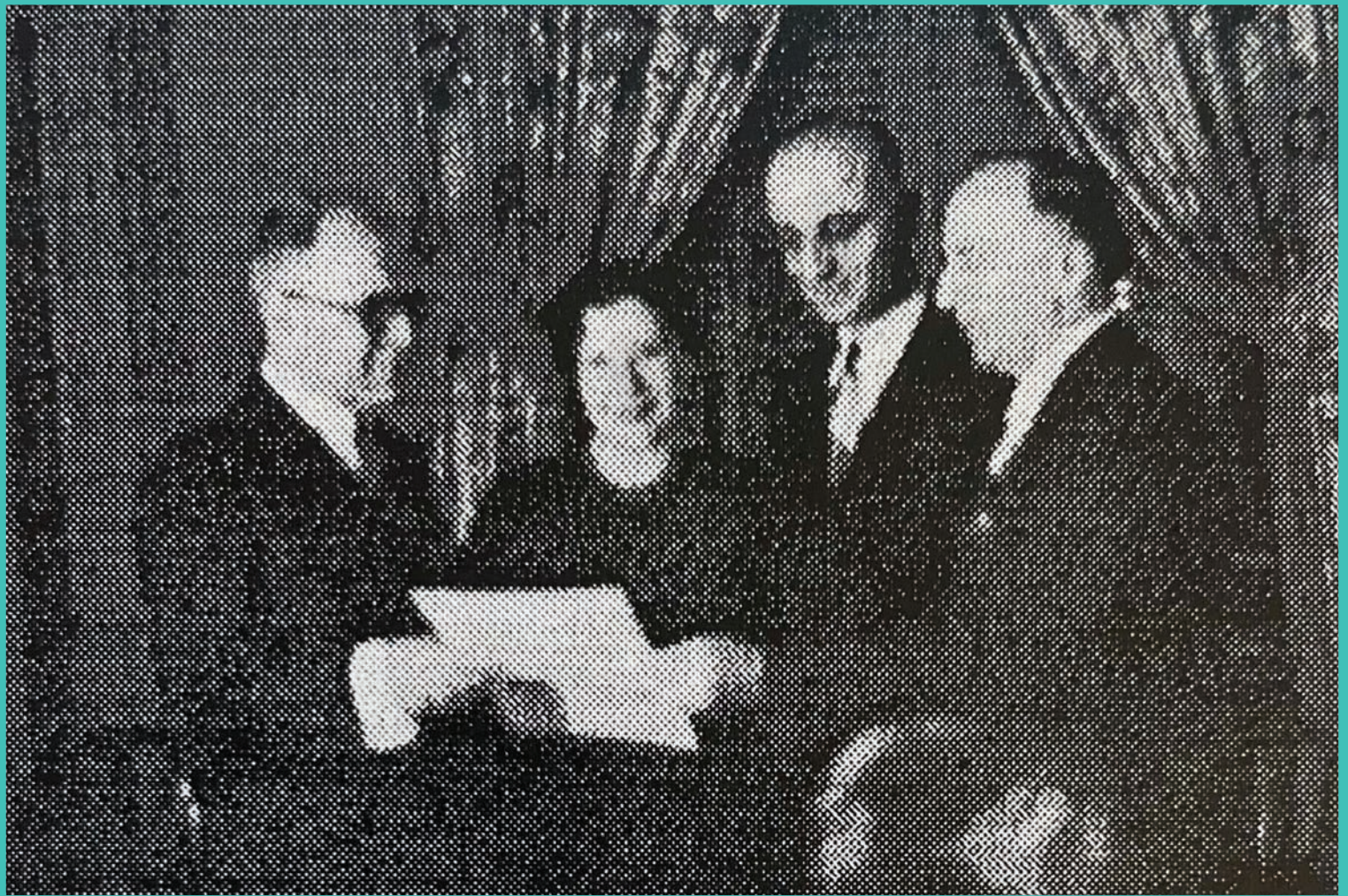
Make check payable to: Armenian Missionary Association of America, memo: Christmas Joy
Mail to: 31 W. Century Road, Paramus, NJ 07652 or make a secure donation online at www.amaa.org



Armenian Missionary Association of America

31 West Century Road
Paramus, NJ 07652

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Paramus, NJ
Permit No. 55



**The signing of the Stephen Philibosian Endowment Fund with AMAA - 1950.
L to R: Mr. & Mrs. Stephen Philibosian, AMAA Executive Secretary Rev. Puzant
Kalfayan and AMAA President Martin Hatch.**